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OPINION METER

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63 without a
government
budget for
FY 2009
DAYS

INSIDE

Mumbai Cleanup

Authorities finished removing bodies from the bullet-and-grenade-scarred Taj Mahal hotel Monday.

ASIA...Page 15



Box Office

Movie crowds gobbled up the holiday comedy "Four Christmases," which debuted at No. 1 with \$31.7 million.

LIFE & STYLE...Page 21

CUC lowers electric fuel rates for December. **PAGE 2**

36 pct. of guns in NMI have expired permits. **PAGE 5**

Economic study author to hold presentations on island

By **AGNES E. DONATO**
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REPORTER

One of the economists of the recently re-

leased economic study on the Northern Marianas is coming to Saipan next week to meet with local government officials, business leaders and the community.

Malcolm McPhee, one of the authors of the study titled *Economic Impact of Federal Laws on the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands*, will meet

with Gov. Benigno R. Fitial on Tuesday, Dec. 9, 2008, 11am.

On the same day, at 1:30pm, McPhee
See **ECONOMIC** on Page 4

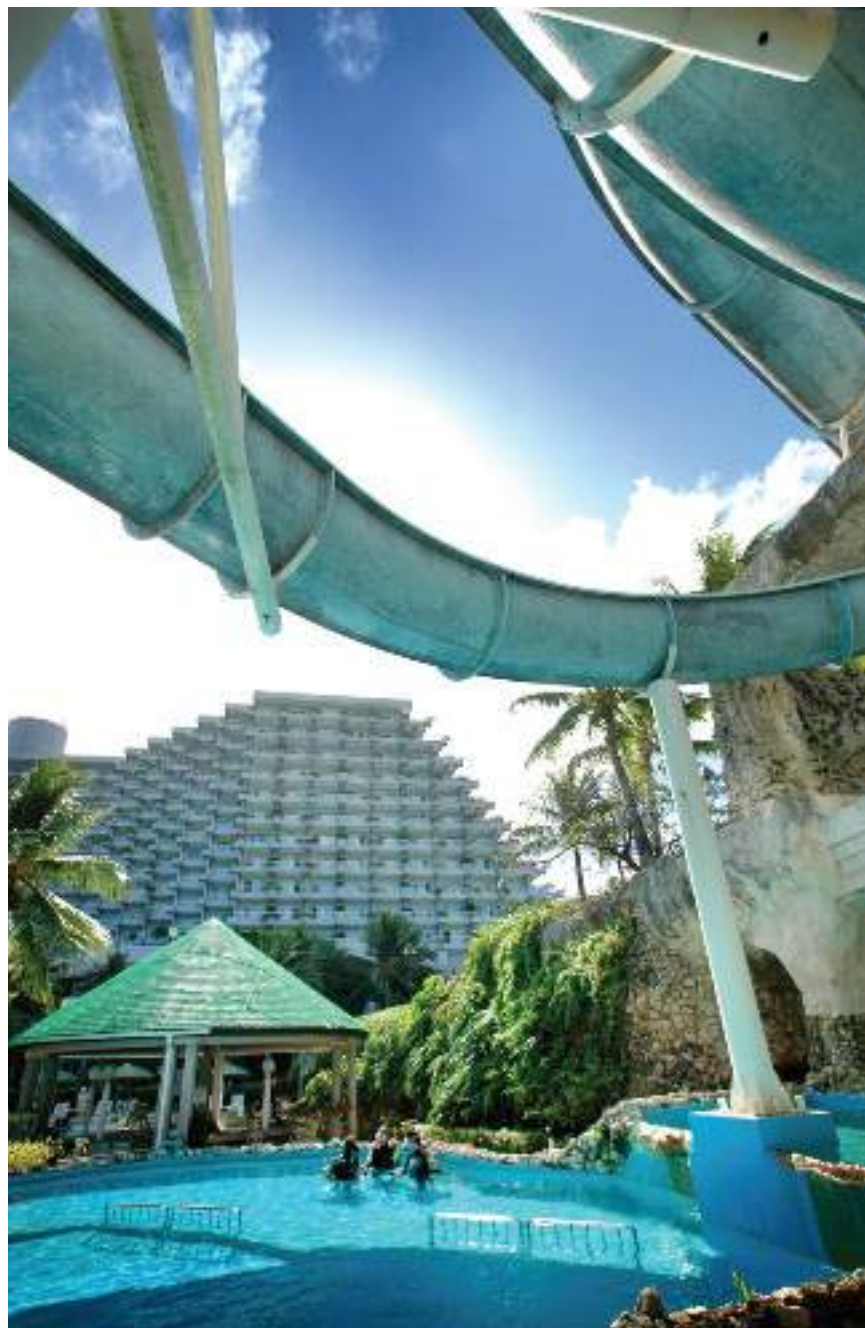
Economy affects Palms upgrade

Palms renovations still underway, but will take longer

By **KRISTI EATON**
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REPORT

Plans for renovations to upgrade Palms Resort Saipan into a five-star international hotel are still underway, but the timeframe for completing the project will need to be extended.

See **ECONOMY** on Page 4



Guests at the Palms Resort Saipan undergo scuba training at the hotel's swimming pool.
SAIPAN TRIBUNE/FILE PHOTO

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

Police arrested over the weekend the driver of the car that swerved along Beach Road and slammed into a concrete fence of a residential compound in Oleai, resulting in the death of his wife.

Young Cheon Kim was apprehended for homicide by vehicle, driving on right side of highway-exceptions, exceeding maximum speed

See **DRIVER** on Page 4

Driver in fatal car crash arrested



FERDIE DE LA TORRE
Corrections officers escort Young Cheon Kim on a wheelchair after a bail hearing yesterday in the Superior Court. Kim was the driver of a car that slammed into a concrete fence in Oleai/Susupe area Saturday night. The accident killed his wife.

Adult biz given 10 months to relocate

By **NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.**
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REPORTER

Adult businesses on Saipan will have just 10 months before they are required to move to the recently designated over-

lay zoning district along Middle Road.

The Zoning Board established and approved the district along the Chalan Pale Arnold known as Middle Road just over two months ago. This is from Chalan

See **ADULT** on Page 4



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Local

CUC lowers electric fuel rates for December

By KRISTI EATON
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REPORTER

As oil prices continue to decrease, so too have power rates.

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. yesterday announced the fluctuating fuel rate for December is 20.7 cents per kilowatt-hour, down from 27.0 cents in November. The all-time high was set in July and August when customers were paying 41.3 cents per

kWh. In May, CUC more than doubled the rates per kWh for residential customers.

Under the new December rates, residential customers using less than 500 kWh will be charged 20.7 cents in fluctuating electric fuel and 1.6 cents for electric non-fuel, for a total of 22.3 cents per kWh.

Customers using 501 to 1,000 kWh will be charged 20.7 cents for fluctuating electric fuel and 6.6 cents for elec-

tric non-fuel, for a total of 27.3 cents per kWh.

Those using 1,001 to 2,000 kWh will pay 20.7 cents for fluctuating electric fuel and 8.6 cents for electric non-fuel, for a total of 29.3 cents per kWh.

Residential customers using more than 2,000 kWh will pay 20.7 cents for fluctuating electric fuel and 12.7 cents for electric non-fuel, for a total of 33.4 cents per kWh. All residential customers must pay a \$5.60

fixed customer charge.

Commercial customers will pay 20.7 cents for fluctuating electric fuel and 8.6 cents for electric non-fuel, for a total of 29.3 cents per kWh. Government agencies will pay 20.7 cents for fluctuating electric fuel and 9.1 cents for electric non-fuel, for a total of 29.8 cents per kWh. Commercial and government customers must also pay a monthly fixed customer charge of \$7.67.

Three new flights from Japan to begin

Asiana Airlines soon will launch a new thrice-weekly flight between Osaka, Japan and Saipan.

The new service will begin Dec. 19.

The service will be part of a new code-sharing operation between Asiana and All-Nippon Airways. ANA will place its flight code on Asiana's service, allowing ANA to bring Saipan back into its network for the first time in 16 years.

Each flight will have 177 seats, for a total of 531 seats each week.

"Added seats to the destination is always welcome. We welcome the added seats," said Perry Tenorio, Marianas Visitors Authority

managing director.

The current state of the Japanese economy is a concern, but hopefully Osaka can support the additional seats each week, he said.

Frequent flyer members of either airline will be able to accrue and redeem mileage on the code-sharing flights.

Also on Dec. 19, Asiana will add its flight code to ANA's domestic flights, linking Kansai with Sapporo, Fukuoka and Kagoshima.

Yesterday, Asiana and ANA began a code-sharing operation between Kansai Airport and Gimpo Airport in Seoul. (Kristi Eaton)

Licensing board's appointees now require Senate approval

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial has signed into law a bill requiring Senate approval for appointments to the Health Care Professions Licensing Board.

Under the new law, all future appointees of the medical licensing board must go through the Senate confirmation process.

The Legislature previously passed a bill with a similar intent. Gov. Benigno R. Fitial vetoed the legislation because of a technical problem. The old bill sought to amend the now-repealed law that had created the defunct Medical Professional Licensing Board. The Health Care Professions Licensing Board replaced MPLD in 2007 as the independent regulatory body for medical professionals in the Commonwealth.

On Oct. 7, 2008, the House of Representatives passed a modified version of the bill. The Senate followed suit on Oct. 17.

Sponsored by Rep. Victor

Hocog, the measure states that, "the powers, duties and functions of the board carry great responsibility and importance to the health and welfare of the people of the CNMI. To ensure the integrity and dignity of the Health Care Professions Licensing Board, the Legislature finds that credentials of appointees to the board should be thoroughly scrutinized."

Currently, the licensing board consists of five members appointed by the governor. No Senate confirmation is required.

The board includes one dentist, two physicians, and two members from other health care professions. To be appointed, a health care professional must be practicing in the Commonwealth, a CNMI resident for two years, and engaged in the practice of his or her profession for at least five years before the appointment. (Agnes E. Donato)



JMTC MEETING

Japan Marianas Tourism Club chair Katsuaki Kobayashi, seated fifth from right, and JMTC members held their semi-annual meeting yesterday, Dec. 1, with the Marianas Visitors Authority to discuss tourism related topics, including key market updates and marketing strategies. JMTC members also had an opportunity to meet CNMI Gov. Benigno R. Fitial, Senate President Pete P. Reyes and Reps. Joe Reyes and Ed Salas.

\$400K allotted for Rota projects

A bill earmarking \$400,000 from the interest earned on Commonwealth Development Authority bonds is now law.

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial on Thanksgiving Day signed into law House Bill 16-186, appropriating \$250,000 of the interest income for perimeter fencing and other

infrastructure improvements at Sinapalo Elementary School, and \$150,000 for new tractors for the Department of Lands and Natural Resources on Rota.

Rep. Victor Hocog sponsored the bill, with House Floor Leader Joseph N. Camacho signing on as co-sponsor. The House of

Representatives passed the measure during a session on Rota on Oct. 31, 2008. The Senate approved on Nov. 6, 2008.

The funds had originally been appropriated for Rota's much-delayed Route 100 paving project. The road project involves paving the 12-kilometer highway to provide an alternate connection between the villages of Sinapalo and Songsong. It

has been delayed due to design changes due to typhoon damage and the default of a former contractor. In addition, the Federal Highway Administration has required the local government to obtain title to private lands that would be affected by the road project before starting the construction. The government has no funding to acquire these lands. (Agnes E. Donato)

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CUC consultants: Set six-month power rates

By KRISTI EATON
kristi_eaton@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Consultants hired to investigate power rates has recommended that the Public Utilities Commission set provisional electric rates for CUC for the next 18 months, with periodic reviews and possible changes during that time.

"The instability associated with CUC's electricity sales leads us to a recommendation we believe to be the only practical and prudent course of current action," the consultants wrote in the 58-page report.

The Public Utilities Commission hired Georgetown Consulting Group, Inc. to conduct the investigation to help PUC set the utility rates. PUC must review and set utility rates before the Dec. 31, 2008, deadline set by law. If the PUC fails to meet this deadline, CUC will be forced to reduce power rates down to 17 cents per kWh—a prospect that will make it impossible for CUC to pay for fuel supply and maintenance of its engines and to pay its independent power producers.

The first review of set rates should take place in June 2009 with subsequent reviews conducted six and 12 months after, the report states.

Levelized tariff

The consultants recommend that instead of setting a monthly electric fuel charge, PUC establish a levelized energy adjustment charge tariff that remains in place for six months. The formula used for the tariff would be transparent to PUC as well as ratepayers, the consultants note. With CUC's cooperation, the consultants believe a tariff could be set by Jan. 1.

A six-month set rate would benefit CUC by recovering all prudent costs and maintaining viability. A set rate would benefit the customers by allowing them to plan ahead for their bills, according to the report.

CUC executive director Antonio Muña could not be reached for comment yesterday, while PUC officials cannot comment until the public hearing later this month.

Business plan

The Georgetown Consultants also recommend CUC officials

'Horrendous'

"Currently, the power plant facilities of CUC are in horrendous condition—exception being those power plants under the day-to-day management of private parties under contract to CUC—and are in various states of disrepair," the report states, adding that many engines are well past the maintenance schedules. "This situation is totally intolerable and demonstrates a level of past management neglect that we've never before witnessed by an electric utility. It is this 'single'

Currently, the power plant facilities of CUC are in horrendous condition...and are in various states of disrepair. This situation is totally intolerable and demonstrates a level of past management neglect that we've never before witnessed by an electric utility.

work with them to create a review of revenues and expenses to be submitted to PUC by April 15, 2009. CUC, pursuant to Public Law 16-17, should also create a business plan that addresses the following:

- power plant rehabilitation program;
- emergency generation;
- private sector assistance agreements;
- debt restructuring;
- investment capital for rehabilitation;
- environmental compliance and operating permits;
- renewable energy and fuel diversification;
- accounts receivable;
- operation and maintenance staffing levels; and
- other business planning issues.

systemic failure that has led to the prolonged outages experienced by consumers and the resultant financial impact upon businesses, tourism, and the local economy."

Contract extension

Because of the scope of the work needed in order to rehabilitate of the Power Plants, "there is almost a 100 percent chance that the Aggreko contract will need to be extended," the report states. The Aggreko contract will expire in September 2009, with an option of adding six more months.

The business plan also should outline how CUC should overcome the \$70 million of outstanding debt, principal among it the \$61.5 million that is owed to the Commonwealth Develop-



SAIPAN TRIBUNE/FILE PHOTO

Picture shows the power engines at Power Plant 1 in Lower Base, Garapan. In a 58-page report, the Georgetown Consulting Group, Inc. said, "Currently, the power plant facilities of CUC are in horrendous condition...and are in various states of disrepair."

ment Authority.

Environmental compliance and operating permit issues must be considered, the consultants said, including hazardous waste. Besides the Telesource-managed plant on Tinian, CUC does not have a single operating permit for its generating plants, the report notes. Renewable energy and staffing levels will need to be addressed as well.

Accounts Receivable

If CUC were to correct its accounts receivable problem, it would provide most of the needed cash for the rehabilitation projects, according to the report. In fiscal year 2007, the accounts receivable was approximately \$31.2 million, with \$9.6 million of that from government accounts. That year's external auditor, the report notes, reserved \$12.7 million as uncollectible and wrote off \$2.4 million as bad debt.

"An amount in excess of ten times the average write-off for a utility the size of CUC," the consultants wrote of the \$2.4

million bad debt write off. The report also notes that the 2007 audit did not indicate the allowance amount given to government accounts for uncollected fees.

The balance sheet indicates a high level of non-fuel inventory, approximately \$7.5 million. Based upon the inventory turnover ratio of 0.5 it indicates, "CUC inventory is either overstocked or contains items that are obsolete or items that are very slow moving," the report states.

Below Breakeven

According to the report, during fiscal year 2007, CUC on a cash basis operated at or slightly below a breakeven basis. The electric fuel charge collected slightly more than \$2 than CUC actually spent on fuel expenses.

"However, the income statement is adversely impacted by a very large write-off for bad debt and an extraordinarily high interest expense on debt of \$11.4 million. This high level of interest expense is driven by the CDA default and the interest charge

associated with the acceleration \$177.5 million of principal and interest of all of the CDA loans," the report says.

The report says there are a number of factors contributing to CUC's current state: fuel price volatility; tardiness in collections; loss of industry customers; loss of retail customers from garment industry; decline in tourism; and the failure of several generating units due to neglect and a lack of resources.

Liquidity Crisis

"The primary impact of these factors has created a liquidity crisis causing CUC to put in place among the most austere measures we have ever witnessed at an electric utility," the report states.

All capital expenditures have ceased because every dollar available from any source goes to paying the fuel supplier and expenses for payroll and other operating expenses.

"Using all the liquidity available has led to the current situation where there are no funds available for undertaking essential rehabilitation projects, normal maintenance activities, and the payment of debt service to the Commonwealth Development Authority. Evidence gained during discovery and in interviews with CUC representatives strongly suggest that this liquidity crisis has been ongoing for years and is a major factor in CUC's inability to secure short-term financing and to access the long-term debt markets," according to the report.

CUC must respond to the report by Dec. 8. PUC will conduct a public hearing on Dec. 12 at 6 pm in the Senate chamber. A business meeting will be held Dec. 19 at 6pm at the Saipan Chamber of Commerce.

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Palms Resort Saipan

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Low sales but fun remains in 4th Annual Art Sale

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
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REPORTER

Despite low sales compared to previous years, the fun remained in the 4th Annual Holiday Artists' Sale on Saturday and Sunday at the Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe.

Jeanne Rayphand, one of the artists who helped organize the event, reported that about 30 artists who set up their booth observed a slow turnout of visitors to the area.

Regular participant Rino Obar, whose expertise is oil canvas, said everyone is feeling the brunt of the economic downturn.

Obar said he decided to lower his regular prices because of the bad economy but, despite the discounted rates, only one of his works was sold.

He said his prices this time ranged from \$15 to \$200, compared to last year's lowest of \$50.

Still, he enjoys this once-a-year gathering of artists.

"It's just a hobby for me. All of us here have their primary sources of income, so we're enjoying it. It's an opportunity to share each others' ideas," said Obar, who does the t-shirt printing and designing for Rosh's Variety Store.

Abstract artist Barbara Leen Maycock, who participated for the first time, did not sell anything but said he has no regrets.

"This activity is definitely good for me. I was able to talk to the other artists and learned some of their works," said Maycock, who is the principal of Saipan Seventh Day Adventist School.

Another veteran artist, Greg Elliott, said it was a little bit slower in terms of sales this time, although many people visited and inquired about his works.

When asked to give advice to budding artists, Elliott said anybody could make painting a permanent profession.

All you need to do, he said, is find a good teacher, read some good books, keep trying and continue to paint.

"Don't stop working on it," he said.

One of the best-known local artists, Joe Kani (watercolor and acrylic), was also participating for the first time here.

"We are doing this to teach people about the beauty of our culture. It's good to do that for young people and for other places to learn more about the local culture," he said.

Two kids, Alexa Saimon and Jayda Rayphand, said they learned a lot of things like doing Christmas decors. Their teacher was Kaye Christian, who is a volunteer advocating for people with disabilities.

Rayphand expressed appreciation to all participants. She said there were suggestions to do this on a monthly basis but she was not sure this is appropriate in such difficult economic times.

Other participants included NMI

Museum director Robert Hunter, author Joe Race, young and promising Hermes Diaz, Debbie Winkfield, Tokie Mojiko, Laura Williams, Chris Kapileo, CC Longfield, Saimon Rayphand, Jill

Arenovski, Irineo David, Rayo Christian, Rose Diaz, Kate Fuller, Catherine Anderson, and John Davis.

Some of them are experts in jewelry, basket, books and other art crafts.

ADULT

From Page 1

Msgr. Guerrero north to a line extending along the center of Commonwealth Avenue (south side of Sugar King Park).

All so-called adult businesses defined in the Saipan Zoning Law of 2007—including most massage parlors, porno shops and strip clubs—will not be allowed to operate anywhere except in that area beyond September 2009.

At the same time, an adult business should be 200 feet away from the centerline of Middle Road.

Zoning Administrator W. Steve Tilley said an adult business must also be 500 feet apart from another adult business. This idea is to avoid creating closely packed "red light" districts that draw crowds and traffic, and reduce property values.

Any business establishment that falls under the adult business category must contact the Zoning Office and ask for verification.

Every adult business must register now.

The Zoning office will help identify what changes to make in the establishment's outdoor appearance and signs.

The Zoning Office said that any adult business wanting to continue as an adult business after September 2009 must start looking for a location in the adult business overlay zone.

A new adult business may also be permitted in the zone.

The Zoning Office last week observed that many adult businesses have

not been complying with the other provisions of the new law. Tilley warned that notices of violations would be issued soon.

The new law defines many types of business as adult and there are specific definitions for each one, including adult cabaret, adult motel, adult motion picture theater, adult theater, escort agency, massage parlor, nude model studio, sex shop and sexual encounter center.

Shops selling x-rated books, videos or adult novelties are also under this category but there are exceptions depending on the amount of floor area or percent of stock devoted to sale of these goods or whether the store uses advertising terms such as XXX, adult, sex, porno etc. or whether the materials are segregated from minors.

According to the Saipan Zoning Law, no new adult business, and, eventually, no old adult business, will be allowed except in an approved adult business district. The law authorizes the Zoning Board to establish adult business park zoning districts in locations that meet certain requirements for road access; impact on health, safety, or welfare of adjacent land uses; and property management.

An adult business park zoning district is a piece of property composed of one or more lots and/or buildings, that may be developed with one or more adult businesses.

The Zoning Board will evaluate the proposals for adult business parks and consider which, if any, are appropriate to include in the draft regulations. Once the draft regulations are prepared, they will be sent out for public review and comment.

DRIVER

From Page 1

limit, reckless driving-bodily injury/property damage, and driving under the influence of alcohol.

A \$500,000 cash bail was initially imposed for Kim's temporary liberty.

The 41-year-old Kim was on a wheelchair when Corrections officers brought him to the Superior Court yesterday morning for a hearing. His right leg was bandaged. Lawyer Robert Torres served as counsel for Kim.

At the hearing, chief prosecutor Kevin Lynch agreed to a reduced \$5,000 cash bail. Associate Judge Kenneth Govendo granted Lynch's recommendation and allowed the temporary release of Kim to a third party custodian.

Govendo barred the defendant from drinking any alcoholic beverages. Arraignment was set for Dec. 18 at 9am.

Saipan World Resort financial/procurement director Young Bong Cho served as third party custodian.

Kim and his wife, Young Kyung Lee, 40, were both employed at Saipan World Resort.

Lee was pronounced dead at the Commonwealth Health Center by Dr. Martin Kohringer Saturday at 10:40pm.

The couple have two children, who were not with them when the accident happened.

Traffic investigator Flor T. Estabillo

stated in his report that on Saturday at 10:10pm a police officer called the Department of Public Safety via police radio about a car crash along Beach Road in Susupe.

Estabillo said that when he and another officer responded to the scene, he saw a red Ford Taurus car with license plate ABK-127 resting by the concrete wall and facing south. The car had extensive damage to the front and interior.

A passenger, later identified as Lee, was trapped between the front passenger seat and the dashboard panel. DPS fire personnel were forced to use their "Jaws of Life" equipment to extract Lee.

The concrete wall sustained extensive damage and had a hole in it. Concrete debris were scattered in the yard of the residence of Steven Sablan.

Estabillo said that based on his observation at the scene, it appears that Kim's vehicle was traveling north on Beach Road.

Estabillo said the vehicle veered right, struck a traffic sign, and then struck the wall in front of Sablan's residence.

Upon striking the wall, the car's nose remained in contact with the wall, while the rear of the vehicle lost contact with the ground and rotated clockwise.

The car's final resting place was facing southeast. Majority of the damage was to the front passenger side.

Shortly after the arrival of the emer-

gency medical technicians, Kim was transported to CHC for further treatment. Kim had abrasions on the right arm, right forearm, right hand, right chest, and left knee.

After Lee was extracted, she was brought to CHC where she was pronounced dead at 10:40pm on the same night.

Lee had severe head and chest trauma, fractured right rib cage, and a mangled right leg.

The police officer who had called DPS about the accident stated that, as he was driving south on Beach Road, Susupe, he saw the car traveling north at high speed. The car then ran off the roadway and hit the concrete wall.

Another witness told police that, as he was traveling north using the outer lane, he saw the car approaching from the rear at high rate of speed.

The witness said he thought he was going to get hit so he braced himself on the steering wheel. The car ran off the road and struck the wall.

At 11:45pm that night, police placed Kim under arrest.

Estabillo said extensive damage to the vehicle and concrete wall indicate that speed was a factor to the crash. Alcohol was another factor based on the blood drawn at CHC.

Attorney Torres said that Kim is recovering from his injuries and that it is a tragedy.

"We want to see that justice is done," Torres said.

ECONOMIC

From Page 1

will put on a presentation "exclusively" for the members of the Legislature and the governor's Cabinet on the economic report, according to a memorandum that the governor issued yesterday.

Richard A. Pierce, the governor's special assistant for economic affairs and trade relations, said McPhee will make the presentation at a luncheon meeting with major business groups in the Commonwealth, including the governor's Strategic Economic Development Council, the Saipan Chamber of Commerce, and the Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Pierce, the Cabinet official primarily responsible for seeking funding and facilitating data for the economic study, also said the Fitial administration is still

ironing out details of a planned presentation for the members of the community.

The comprehensive economic study provides a wide-ranging and detailed analysis of the current CNMI economy. It explores the factors that affected the CNMI's economic development in the past decade, as well as the CNMI's current economic situation. Most significantly, it examines how new federal laws, especially those relating to labor and immigration, will affect the CNMI's ability to produce jobs, revenue and a private sector tax base.

One of the major conclusions made by the study is that, under a "federalized" immigration system, the Commonwealth will lose approximately 44 percent of its gross domestic product, 60 percent of its jobs, and 45 percent of its personal income by 2015.

The report also lists eight recommendations for the Commonwealth to

achieve economic recovery:

1. Repeal the statute extending the U.S. immigration laws to the CNMI.
 2. Provide emergency financial assistance to respond to the economic crisis in the CNMI.
 3. Produce better data in order to paint a better picture of what is happening in the CNMI economy.
 4. Amend the statute extending the U.S. minimum wage to the CNMI.
 5. Provide effective representation in the U.S. Executive branch.
 6. Create a stronger partnership between the private and public sectors.
 7. Seek federal assistance to small investors.
 8. Consider amending the Covenant.
- McPhee and his co-author of the report, Dick Conway, are the same people who wrote the CNMI economic study released by Northern Marianas College in 1999.

ECONOMY

From Page 1

Palms has been in negotiations with large chains, such as Hilton and Sheraton, to take over management, but before that can be done, several renovations need to be completed. Due to the rapid changes in the global economy, the project is going to take longer than expected, said Hiroyuki Saito, chief financial officer for United Micronesia Development Association Inc. UMDA owns the hotel.

Saito said he could not disclose what hotel chain they are in negotiations with, although it is rumored to be Hilton. There is a memorandum of understanding between the two parties that lists the renovations Palms needs to complete before the new partner will take over management and promotion, Saito said. UMDA will retain control of the hotel.

"We have a list of renovations requirements to satisfy such big hotels," Saito said. "However, a dramatic thing, everybody knows, just happened in the international economical situation. We are not afraid of the situation, and we don't have any idea right now to suspend or give up the project. We need to be really careful in how to approach the market. Obviously the market demand has been changing."

The prospective hotel management company listed the requirements be-

fore the worldwide economy changed, and even the management company is changing some of the things they submitted, Saito said.

"For that reason, I think the initial plan of a timeframe has become a little bit longer than we expected, in order to find the right marketing tools and components to address the right clientele," he said.

The plan is to wait until there is a more clear-cut picture of the economic impact, and then begin construction and renovations to the rooms, Saito added. For the nameplate to actually change and the new management to take over, he anticipates it to take two years.

But, Saito stressed, this does not mean the company is giving up or reducing their plans.

In fact, he said, changes to the hotel continue on a daily basis. The hotel's Japanese lunch buffet re-opened last week and the fitness center has undergone renovations, including the addition of Pilates equipment. The hotel plans to have the biggest Pilates studio in Micronesia and offer instructor certification for Japanese Pilates teachers. The Teppanyaki Restaurant is also being renovated to offer a bigger grill center with a patio to make it attractive to tourists and locals alike, he said.

In November, it was reported that the LaoLao Bay Golf Resort project was being scaled down due to the economy and the drastic depreciation of the Korean won.

36 pct. of guns in NMI have expired permits

**HAFA DAY**

NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.

Children ages 4 to 6 years old exchange ideas with a police officer during the Hafa Day Health Awareness and Fitness Activity at the Garapan Central Park last week.

18 former Sako workers still awaiting share in \$1M award

Eighteen of the 65 former workers of the defunct garment manufacturer Sako Corp. claim that they have yet to receive any amount from the \$1 million judgment awarded them by the federal court three years ago.

Genia R. Gamboa, in a letter to the *Saipan Tribune*, said the 18 workers, including her, are now back working in the Philippines.

Gamboa said some of the workers have already received payment, but 18 of them are still waiting for their share.

She said she tried to contact her former co-workers since Sept. 10, 2008, to get information whether they have already received the money but this has gotten nowhere.

Gamboa identified the other workers who are still waiting for payment as Susana E. Cruz, Nenita Patricio, Estelita Talarde, Felicitas Antiquiera, Juvy Lizano, Evelyn Reginio, Imelda Reginio, Amalia Benabe, Imelda Sagun, Rosalinda Vihar, Marysol Franco, and Marylou Navarra.

The other workers are Mary-Ann Gabatino, Cedela Manahan, Cristina Lagrimas, Exequila Matus, and Gina T. De Guzman.

Gamboa said they are hoping that the federal court or the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission can help them receive the judgment.

In April 2005, the federal court declared Sako liable in the amount of over \$1 million in connection with a lawsuit brought to court by EEOC on behalf of some 65 alien workers.

The court issued a default judgment against Sako, which ceased business operations on Saipan in 2005. *(Ferdie de la Torre)*

Of the 2,166 total number of guns in the CNMI, 785—or 36 percent—have expired licenses, based on Department of Public Safety records.

This was learned in a notice issued yesterday by DPS, where it urged all gun owners with expired licenses to renew their firearms registration and license as soon as possible.

On Saipan, there are a total of 1,638 firearms, with 1,150 that are licensed and 488 that have expired licenses. Of the 161 total number of firearms on Tinian, 71 are licensed, while 90 have expired licenses. On Rota, there are a total of 367 firearms and 160 of them are licensed while 207 have expired licenses.

The date of expiration for a firearms permit is two years from the date of issue, as provided under Commonwealth Code, Title 6, Chapter 2, Weapons Control Act, subsection 2204 (b) 4.

Failure to register a gun is a violation and violators can be charged with illegal possession of firearms.

DPS is giving gun owners with expired licenses 30 days from yesterday to register or transfer their firearms.

“Non-compliance could result with the Department of Public Safety taking further action with violators of expired licenses. We ask these people

Police's car burglarized, cop's gun stolen

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Even a police car is not safe from burglar/s.

An unidentified person or persons reportedly broke into a Department of Public Safety vehicle that was parked at the home of a police officer in Dandan and stole the officer's service firearm Friday morning.

DPS acting spokesperson Police Officer 2 Jason T. Tarkong said the burglar stole the black waist pouch containing Police Officer Florencio Richards's Smith & Wesson 9mm semi-automatic handgun, along with its magazines and ammunition.

Tarkong said that on Friday at 11:57am, Officer Richards reported to DPS a burglary and theft incident that occurred at his residence.

Tarkong said that, according to

Richards, earlier that morning he had noticed that his keys were missing so he did a search inside his residence.

Richards later noticed that the government car assigned to him was unlocked and discovered that the pouch containing his firearm and magazine were missing.

Richards reported the incident to his immediate supervisor, Sgt. Augustine Kaneshi.

Richards is currently assigned to the Crime Scene Investigators Unit as a crime scene technician.

“This case is still under investigation. The release of any information regarding this case is limited,” Tarkong said.

“We would like to ask the public with any information on this case to contact DPS at 664-9042 or call Crime Stoppers should you want to remain anonymous at 234-7272,” Tarkong said.

to please come forward and have your weapon(s) registered,” said Police Officer 2 Jason T. Tarkong, acting DPS spokesman.

Any persons with questions or inquiries may contact the DPS Range-

master, Ambrosio Ogumoro, or the department's Records and Firearms section on Saipan at 664-9072/9073. On the island of Tinian, please call DPS at 433-9222 and on the island of Rota, 532-9526. *(Saipan Tribune)*

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Police cadets undergo firearms certification

Last week, the Department of Public Safety's 19th Police Cycle Academy underwent 40 hours of the Basic Fundamentals of Marksmanship Instruction. This class was conducted

by the Department's Range-master, Ambrosio Ogumoro, and his two assistant Firearms Instructors, Police Officer Jason Tarkong and Officer David Hosono.

The 40 hour training included three days in the classroom covering the basic understanding of safe weapons handling skills. This included two days practical

application on the firing line and methods of night firing techniques. This practical training was conducted at the DPS shooting range located in San Juan, Marpi.

At the end of training, the top 10 shooters competed for the "Top Gun" award. This coveted prize is given to the best overall score on range qualification. The Top Gun

award went to Police Cadet Kelani B. Pangelinan. He will be receiving his award at their graduation ceremony scheduled in late December. **(DPS)**

Japanese investor sues business partner for fraud, deceit

A Japanese investor has sued another investor for allegedly defrauding him in a loan and stock purchase deal for a corporation.

Mamoru Ueda sued Hidehito Hida and Mugen Corp. for fraud, deceit, and misrepresentation.

Ueda, through counsel Mark A. Scoggins, asked the Superior Court to declare that Hida and Mugen Corp. have cancelled

the Stock Transfer Agreement by their failure to perform under the terms of the oral and written agreements.

Ueda demanded payment of ¥27.3 million and \$38,000 in actual damages plus \$150,000 in liquidated damages.

The plaintiff also sought attorney's fees and court costs.

Scoggins stated in the complaint that in June 2006, Ueda

loaned ¥2 million in cash to Hida. In July 2007, he loaned an additional ¥1 million in cash to Hida.

In 2007, the plaintiff made six additional loans directly to Hida by wire transfers: ¥200,000; ¥150,000; ¥50,000; ¥150,000; ¥1 million; ¥150,000.

Scoggins said that his client also made two additional loans—¥1.5 million and ¥500,000—to Hida in order to

pay off the latter's debts to Kazuo Misaki.

Scoggins said that between mid-2007 and the end of 2007, Ueda made loans in excess of ¥6.7 million.

In late 2007 and early 2008, Hida offered to sell Mugen Corp. and Waft by the Sea to Ueda.

The lawyer said that because Hida was unable to pay back the money Ueda had loaned him,

the two men agreed that the loans in excess of ¥6.7 million would be applied to the purchase of Mugen Corp. and Waft by the Sea.

On Jan. 12, 2008, Hida and Ueda entered into a written Stock Transfer Agreement whereby Hida promised to transfer 180,000 shares of stock in Mugen Corp. to Ueda for consideration in the amount of \$180,000.

In addition to the more than ¥6.7 million paid by Ueda to Hida, the plaintiff made several more payments to Hida for the shares in Mugen Corp. between

January and July 2008 in the amount of ¥14.7 million.

Scoggins said his client paid more money between January to July 2008 in the amount of \$38,000 and ¥3.6 million.

The lawyer said Hida deceived and defrauded Ueda by inducing Ueda to lend Hida monies that he did not intend to repay.

"Mr. Hida also deceived and defrauded Mr. Ueda by failing to apply monies loaned to him to the purchase of stock in Mugen Corp. and by inducing him to pay more monies for stock that Mr. Hida never intended to transfer," he said. **(Ferdie de la Torre)**

Deleon Guerrero is MVA Employee of the Quarter



MVA

Marianas Visitors Authority Employee of the Quarter Larry John Deleon Guerrero, center, receives his certificate of recognition from MVA managing director Perry Tenorio and deputy managing director Judy Torres.

The Marianas Visitors Authority recently selected Larry John A. Deleon Guerrero as the recipient of the Employee of the Quarter award.

Deleon Guerrero was recognized for his strong positive character and willingness to go the extra mile in the service of MVA and its goals. He was also recognized for assuming the responsibilities as the acting Marketing Manager from April – September 2008.

"He stepped up to the plate and took on a leadership role, and he took on a great deal of responsibility," said Bruce Bate-man, MVA Marketing Manager. "I know how much work is involved, and I have seen the results of his efforts during those months. Those efforts show a level of topnotch professional excellence."

Deleon Guerrero has been an MVA employee since Septem-

ber 2005. He is now a Marketing Specialist for the Marketing division of MVA.

"I am just happy to do my job to the best of my ability and feel even better knowing that I am contributing to something greater than me," said Deleon Guerrero of his recognition. "I really could not have done this without the support of the rest of MVA team, so I would like to thank them for their support and confidence."

MVA offers an incentive for individual motivation towards providing quality service, increasing productivity, job knowledge and skills. The program recognizes outstanding performance and employee contribution towards meeting MVA's goals and objectives. As the employee of the quarter, Deleon Guerrero received a certificate of recognition and a premier parking spot. **(MVA)**

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Low turnout mars 'Don't Be A Turkey Walk'

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
n_rodriguez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Even the turnout at the 8th Annual "Don't Be A Turkey Walk" was greatly affected by the islands' economic woes.

Of the 500 certificates for registered participants that were distributed prior to last Saturday's event, only about 70 showed up at the Garapan basketball court.

Diana Camacho of the organizing Ayuda Network Inc. attributed the low turnout to the economic crisis.

She said this year's number of participants was way below the big turnout of 200 walkers in the previous year.

The event is the finale of the Diabetes Prevention and Protection month.

Those who showed up were given free medical check up such as blood sugar and blood pressure, free t-shirt and free food by volunteers from the Northern Marianas College Nursing Club and the Emmanuel College Vocational Nursing.

The participants ranged from

4 to 70 years old.

Four-year old Juhn Tenorio, who joined with her mom and brother, said he has been doing this for the past two years and likes it very much.

Some students from the Ladera International School as well as members of the Saipan Southern High School National Honor Society also made their presence felt.

Society member Coquina Teregoyo said it was her first time to join the walk and found it a good exercise.

Like most of the walkers, she managed to reach the 13 Fishermen's monument and walked back to the Garapan basketball court.

The Ayuda Network, along with the Commonwealth Diabetes Coalition and Saipan Walking Association, helped organized the event, with the aim of promoting physical activity and raise funds for the diabetes coalition.

Each walker paid \$10, which will be used to support the coalition's mission to bring about diabetes awareness and education in the community.



PHOTO COURTESY OF LISS

Members of the Ladera International School-Saipan delegation have their picture taken at the 10K turning point during the 2008 Annual Don't Be A Turkey Walk. Leading the 12-member group is YangGyu Brendon Shin (in yellow shirt), LISS manager and residential counselor.

Chamorro-English dictionary project enters its 3rd month

The Northern Marianas Council for the Humanities Chamorro-English Dictionary Revision Project is now on its third month of implementation.

The first set of 90 pages of the 1975 Chamorro-English Dictionary by Topping, Ogo and Dungca is being reviewed and expanded by the six working groups on Saipan, Tinian and Rota. The goal is to revise and update as much of the entries as possible by the third year of the project in 2011.

The six working groups of three members each are headed by Carmen S. Taimanao, Bernie P. Sablan, Jose Sanchez, Vicente Borja, Tita Hocog, and Angie C. Fitial.

Another component of the project includes new entries with emphasis on cultural words that are not in the original dictionary. A special group of cultural experts in areas such as traditional fishing, customs and rituals, traditional medicine, etc., have been identified to serve as possible consultants. Upon completion of all the new entries and revisions during Year 3, another group of Chamorro language experts, particularly the elders, will be consulted on specific words and meanings, as needed.

Other components of the project include a series of oral history video productions that will begin in Year 2, and several workshops related to the revision of the dictionary, language

endangerment issues, orthography, and others.

This project is funded by the National Science Foundation as a collaborative project between the University of California, Santa Cruz, and the NMI Council for the Humanities. The principal investigators for this collaborative project are Dr. Sandra Chung, a linguist at the University of California-Santa Cruz, and Dr. Elizabeth Diaz Rechebei, of EDR Consulting, for the NMI

Council for the Humanities. Dr. Rita Hocog Inos is the Work Group Leader for the six working groups and the thematic groups.

The principal local partner in this project is the CNMI is the Chamorro/Carolinian Language Policy Commission. Other supporters of the project include the Joeten/Kiyu Public Library, the Public School System, Indigenous Affairs, and several other organizations and volunteers in the CNMI and in Guam.

Everyone is encouraged and invited to contribute words that are not in the current dictionary by contacting the principal investigator or the working group leader by e-mail.

For more information about the project, visit the NMI Humanities website: www.nmi-humanities.org, or e-mail Dr. Elizabeth Diaz Rechebei at edrprojects@gmail.com or Dr. Rita Hocog Inos at rithocoginos@gmail.com. (PR)

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MORE publicity, one MORE NMI fan

MOMO Magazine editor Yumi Yamanaka takes a picture of a beach while in the CNMI. MVA

As a travel bureau, you know you've sold your destination when a magazine editor wants to come back on a personal visit when the assignment is over.

MOMO Magazine, distribut-

ed to banks and other financial institutions throughout Japan, recently sent editor and photographer Yumi Yamanaka to Saipan on a travel feature story. From the time of her arrival on

Nov. 17, 2008, Yamanaka interviewed local and Japanese senior citizens and conducted photo shoots at various tourist sites and facilities attractive to active senior visitors from Japan.

Somewhere between the sunsets, the garden strolling and sampling her first fried ice-cream, Yamanaka decided there was more to the island and its neighbors than she could discover in a few days. "This place is so interesting I want to come back and vacation here," Yamanaka said before returning to Japan a short three days after her arrival.

The Marianas Visitors Authority hopes the readers of *MOMO Magazine* will feel the same allure. *MOMO Magazine*, published through Pro-vision, is a color glossy magazine with articles on culture, travel, food, and health targeting active se-

nior citizens. The free, six-page *MOMO* article that is the focus of Yamanaka's tour will be published in February 2009.

"We are pleased to help Ms. Yamanaka discover what Saipan, Tinian and Rota have to offer active seniors and other visitors, and we welcome them to come and discover our islands for themselves," said Perry Tenorio, managing director of MVA. "*MOMO* has a circulation of 300,000 copies per issue, so we hope our invitation will be extended broadly."

Yamanaka's tour of Saipan was supported by in-kind contributions from several MVA members: Hafadai Beach Hotel, Revolving 360 Restaurant, Oleai Beach Bar & Grill, Saipan Botanical Garden, Stars & Stripes, and Kinpachi Restaurant. The value of the *MOMO Magazine* ad is estimated at \$68,571US. (MVA)

AT THE LEGISLATURE

House session today

The CNMI House of Representatives will have a session today, Dec. 2, at 1:30pm in the House Chamber. The House is likely to take up the revised budget proposal for FY 2009 at the next session. The bill is still under review and undergoing changes, and the session may be postponed for later this week until the bill is finalized.

Public hearings set

The House has scheduled public hearings on the proposed public land lease for a new 357-room hotel in As Matuis, immediately north of Palms Resort. Flame Sako Resort Hotel & Spa is seeking 109,003 square meters of property for the facility.

The hearings are scheduled for Dec. 9, 6:30pm at GTC Elementary School, and Dec. 10, 6:30pm, at Multi-Purpose Center and will be conducted jointly by the House Committee on Natural Resources and the Senate Committee on Resources, Economic Development, and Programs. Comments may also be submitted in writing via email, hand-delivery, fax (664-8983 or 664-8938), or mail (CNMI Legislature PO Box 500586).

For more information, contact House Natural Resources chair Rep. Ramon Tebuteb at 664-8893 or email rtebuteb@yahoo.com; or contact Senate Economic Development chair Sen. Jude Hofschneider at 664-8922 or senatorjuhofschneider@yahoo.com.

McPhee-Conway economic report presentation

Malcolm McPhee will be coming to the CNMI to deliver presentations on the economic report that he recently prepared with Dr. Dick Conway for the Governor through a Department of the Interior grant. The presentation for the members of the Legislature, the Governor, and the members of his Cabinet is scheduled for Dec. 9, 2008, at 1:30pm in the Multi-Purpose Center.

Source: Office of Rep. Tina Sablan

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

December 2, 1998

Cuts await fat pay

Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio yesterday opened the possibility of cutting back the salaries of highly-paid government employees in what could be the most serious cost-cutting step the cash-strapped administration might implement to deal with the deepening financial woes. According to the governor, the pay cut is part of a four-point proposal he will unveil to the Legislature in a meeting scheduled this week apparently aimed at seeking the backing of lawmakers. "I think everybody should...share some of the hardships we are facing now. One best solution will be to at least temporarily reduce (the salaries) of those earning the highest level of income," Tenorio said in an interview, in order to avert a potential layoff in the 5,000-strong government work force.

BPL eases business fears on Managaha

The Board of Public Land will seek fresh proposals for the commercial development of Managaha Island to draw more participants in the multi-million tourism project despite a controversial law giving preference to local corporations, its chairman said yesterday. "The board's decision based on the new law is to have a new request for proposals, advertise it and give everybody else the chance," said Tomas B. Aldan, chairman of the policy-making body, as he allayed fears that Public Law 11-48 would influence the selection of the next operator of the popular tourist destination. The law, which was put in place following the Legislature's override of Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio's veto of a measure favoring NMI descent to run Managaha, has triggered an uproar from businessmen seeking concession rights who felt the legislation was unfair.

December 2, 1999

CDA cuts funding to BDC

The Commonwealth Development Authority yesterday terminated its annual grant agreement with the Northern Marianas College's Business Development Center which funds the graduate internship program. According to CDA Board Chair John S. Tenorio, the decision was fueled by the failure of NMC-BDC to carry out its program this year. Mr. Tenorio said he was disappointed with the outcome of the program, having attracted only three interns this year despite funding of \$93,000 by CDA. The Center usually receives eight to 12 students every year from the U.S. mainland who assist BDC in helping local residents in their businesses.

DPH backs creation of AIDS center

Public Health Secretary Joseph Kevin Villagomez yesterday said he supports the establishment of a center for people suffering from AIDS or infected with HIV in the Northern Marianas. The concept, similar to Guam, was suggested by Moses Saburo, the first person on the island to publicly admit that he's infected with the AIDS-causing virus. However, such plan should be supported by the community to ensure its success and sustainability, Mr. Villagomez said. He suggested to the local AIDS Council to look at the facility in Guam to learn how it can be applied in the CNMI.

December 2, 2002

Poker firms limited to 12 hrs

Beginning Friday last week, operation hours of all poker arcades in the Commonwealth are now limited to just 12 hours daily, from 10am until 10pm, excepting those machines operating inside casinos. The Department of Finance implemented this move "on an emergency basis," though it did not explain why in the notice it issued to all poker machine establishments in the CNMI.

Hotel cited for waste oil spill

Several of the 90 container drums filled with waste oil and stored on the grounds of the Plumeria Resort in San Roque have been leaking, just a few meters away from the beach-an incident that the Coastal Resources Management Office considers to be potentially catastrophic to the environment. CRMO administrator Joaquin D. Salas said enforcement officers discovered this recently after visiting the hotel, which has not even satisfied its penalty settlement obligation in connection with an oil spill in July 2001 that spread to adjacent wetlands. Salas said the agency would revise the hotel's permit to compel it to hook up with the Commonwealth Utilities Corp.'s power supply, since its operation of a power generator is the reason why the hotel is stocking waste oil.

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Director, P&S



Fitia! turns 63 with party at Fiesta Resort

PHOTOS BY REY BELGADO

Gov. Benigno R. Fitia! celebrated his 63rd birthday on Nov. 27 with a party at the Hibiscus Hall of the Fiesta Resort and Spa Saipan.

The event was attended by numerous island luminaries, families, friends and guests of the celebrant.

The party also served as a fundraising dinner for the governor's re-election bid. Here are some pictures from the happy occasion:



Opinion

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

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EDITORIAL

Massacre in Mumbai

Many things about the savage terrorist attacks on hotels, restaurants and other “soft targets” in Mumbai are not fully known: the group or groups responsible; their links, if any, to Pakistan or other outside forces such as al-Qaida. But morally, the relevant facts are perfectly clear. The assaults cost the lives of at least 145 people. The vast majority were civilians, Indian and foreign, including two visitors from Virginia and an American-born rabbi whose crime, to the terrorists, seems to have been helping Jews passing through Mumbai. Whatever its ostensible ideology, this was murder. And it is a stark reminder, if any were needed, that, even when governments are properly busy fending off a global financial crisis, they cannot neglect the threat of terrorism.

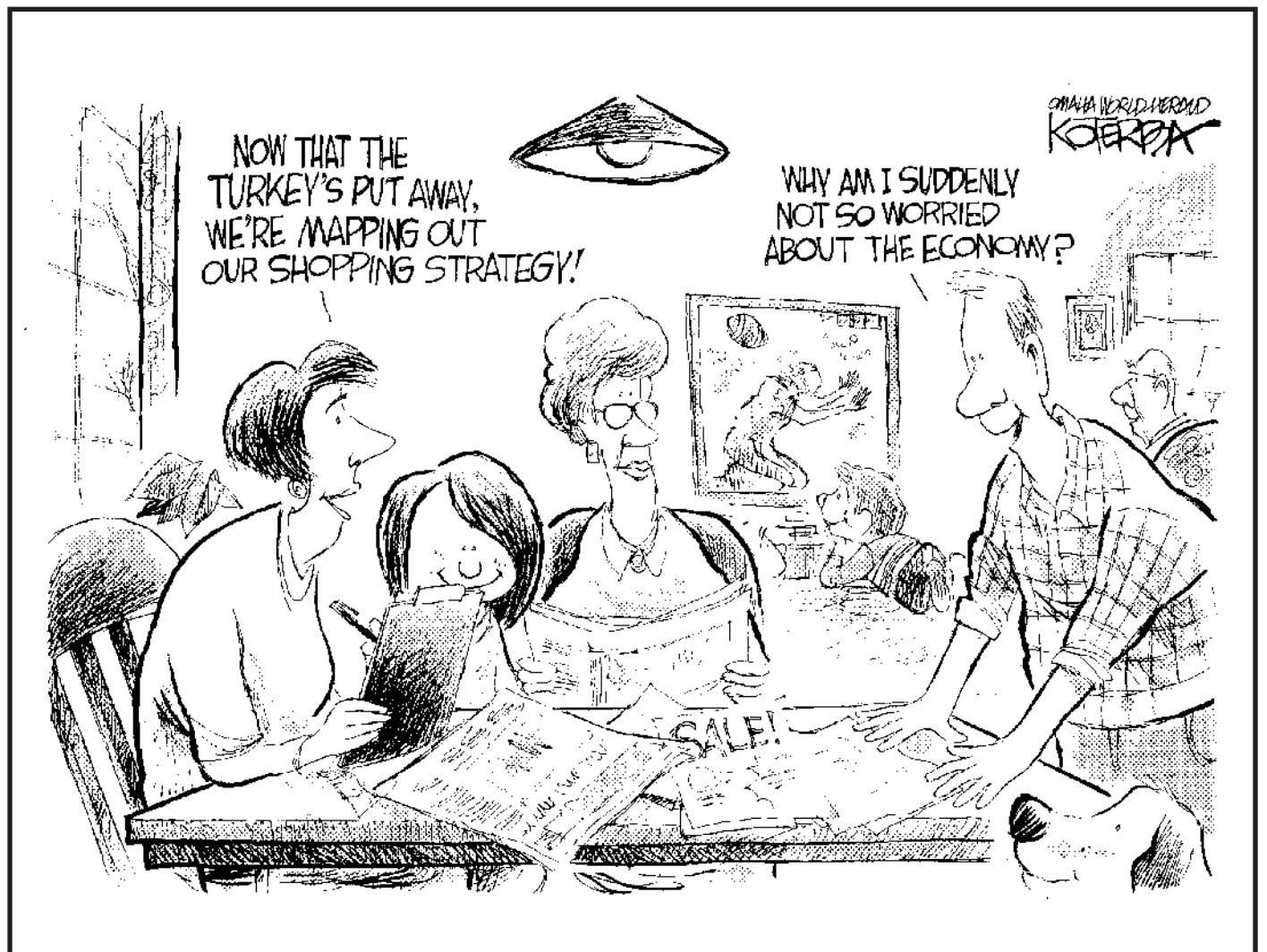
Before these awful raids, news from South Asia had been encouraging. The central problem remains pacifying Afghanistan, where U.S. and other NATO forces struggle to stamp out Taliban and al-Qaida elements. Resurgent terrorist groups enjoy havens in Pakistan’s tribal areas as well as alleged protection or support from elements of Pakistani military intelligence. For Pakistan’s army, Afghanistan is a traditional sphere of influence that must be denied to India, whose ties with Kabul have grown since the United States ousted the Taliban from power.

Washington, however, wants the Pakistani army’s cooperation in fighting terrorism. In recent weeks, U.S. officers in Afghanistan reported better results, crediting the Pakistanis with taking the offensive against the Taliban on Pakistani territory. Meanwhile, the newly elected government of President Asif Ali Zardari has reined in the domestic political activities of military intelligence and reached out to India. Zardari promised a no-first-use policy on nuclear weapons and spoke of an eventual “nonnuclear treaty.” A rapprochement with India would permit the Pakistani government to devote more military resources to the fight against terrorists.

Islamist extremists and their backers inside Pakistan do not want that; the attacks in Mumbai may well have been calculated to set off a new Indo-Pakistani crisis. India’s foreign minister said as much, pointing a finger of blame at Pakistan and telling its foreign minister, who was visiting New Delhi at the time of the attacks, that there could be no “leap” in relations unless Islamabad cracked down on the people responsible for the attacks. Pakistan responded constructively, agreeing to an Indian request that its military intelligence chief go to India to share what Islamabad knows about the origins of the attacks. Zardari assured Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh that Pakistan “will cooperate with India in exposing and apprehending the culprits and masterminds behind” the attacks, adding, “We should not fall into the trap of the militants.”

The United States, in what’s left of the Bush administration’s term and right from the start of the Obama administration’s, must continue nudging these two rivals toward cooperation. As the bloodbath in Mumbai so vividly illustrates, terrorism is not only America’s enemy, but Pakistan’s and India’s as well.

(c) 2008, The Washington Post



Citizenship 2.0

Last month, the *Wall Street Journal* reported an important effect of the 2008 presidential campaign: For the first time, traffic at left-leaning political Web sites overtook traffic at right-leaning competitors. The Drudge Report and Free Republic had the largest number of unique visitors in September 2007, but in September 2008, that honor went to the Huffington Post.

Political strategists have been analyzing the impact of the Internet on American political communication since at least the mid-1990s. When Hillary Clinton complained in 1998 about a “vast right-wing conspiracy,” she was drawing on a 332-page study done by the 1995 Clinton White House alleging that a “right-wing conspiracy industry” was moving anti-Clinton material from Web sites in the United States to conservative papers in Britain and then back to mainstream U.S. print publications.

That 1995 report, and Clinton, too, were right on one point: The earliest significant impact of the Internet on political communication did come from the right.

Drudge was founded in 1994 and Free Republic in 1996. MoveOn was created in 1998—precisely to respond to online anti-Clinton efforts—but it didn’t gain real prominence until 2003, when George Soros invested. The other major left-leaning sites appeared after George W. Bush’s election: Democratic Underground in 2001, Daily Kos in 2002 and Huffington Post not until 2005.

This pattern makes sense: The right, while in opposition, innovated with Internet tools; when the left in turn found itself out of power, it too developed new types of political communication.

But if Clinton was correct that the right dominated the Internet in the mid-90s, she wrongly attributed its success to conspiratorial methods. The word “conspiracy” fails to capture the remarkable power generated by Internet-based communication.

There are basically two kinds of influential political Web sites: sites that use a top-down hierarchy, whereby a central organization develops a message and disseminates it using social-networking technology, and sites that use a Wikipedia-type method, in which thousands of individual users contribute content and drive the message. This latter approach is exactly the opposite of conspiratorial.

The earliest and most powerful right-leaning Web site, Free Republic, used the non-hierarchical method. Free Republic developed innovative Internet architecture to build a sort of Wikipedia of citizenship, a do-it-yourself kit for spreading messages and connecting them with local, face-to-face activism. The site’s discussion lists—which have global reach—are fed by participants and connected by those participants to a plethora of state message boards organizing real-time, boots-on-the-ground political action. The influence of the site reflects the power of self-organizing social phenomena, not a conspiracy.

Notably, the right has adopted the Wikipedia method more consistently than the left. MoveOn employs the top-down struc-

By DANIELLE ALLEN

Special to The Washington Post

The writer is the UPS Foundation Professor at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, N.J.



ture, as does the Huffington Post. Daily Kos blends the grass-roots and hierarchical methods. Democratic Underground copied Free Republic’s grass-roots approach, but with less powerful architecture. One can’t help wondering whether the right’s more successful use of such self-organizing systems reflects the concrete impact of libertarian ideology.

But 2008 brought one major exception to the general pattern. Over the last two years, the Obama campaign built another “Wikipedia” of citizenship. It used its Web site to disseminate tools for grass-roots organizing and made its campaign infrastructure infinitely expandable as groups replicated over and over, learning from and copying one another. The campaign infrastructure became, to a significant degree, self-organizing. This explains its remarkable people power.

What will these successes mean for the future of our politics? In Federalist No. 10, James Madison argued that the geographical scope of the new country—even with just 13 states—would prevent the development of nationwide factions. But the Internet has eradicated barriers of geography, enabling much more effective factional organization than the Founders could have imagined. This is what Clinton was really marking when she complained about the “vast right-wing conspiracy.”

Now, however, we are at a turning point. We’ve finally reached something of a left-right equilibrium in the dramatic restructuring of the public sphere that has been under way for the past decade. Against this background, on Nov. 4 the Obama campaign sent an e-mail to supporters from the president-elect signaling aspirations to convert the campaign’s success with social networking technologies into a tool not merely for winning but for good governance.

Such a conversion would require transcending the factional patterns that currently define Internet-based political communication. It would demand a category shift: to remake the tools of factional organization as instruments of broad, cross-partisan and respectful public engagement.

Can this be done? If not, the Obama team’s digital network could well become nothing more than an outsized, 21st-century version of a ward machine. If it can be done, it could restore a richer experience of citizenship.

EDITORIAL POLICY The *Saipan Tribune* welcomes comments on any article, column, editorial, or topic that may be of interest to the public. Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, CIC Centre, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Letters to the Editor

Aha Moku who?

Much has been said about an Oct. 13, 2008, letter that was written to President Bush by a group of Hawaiians called the Aha Moku Council, asking him to not designate the Northern Marianas National Marine Monument.

This group is a creation of the Western Pacific Fisheries Management Council. The Aha Moku Council is supposed to organize and consult with Native Hawaiians who represent their ahupua’a, a traditional land division system in Hawaii.

The Aha Moku Council has not yet organized, nor have they consulted with any of the Hawaiian groups representing their ahupua’a on Hawaiians taking a position on the creation of the Northern Marianas National Marine Monument and yet, at the urging of WESPAC, sent a letter, purporting to represent the Native Hawaiian’s position.

The letter that states, “When you created the Papahānau-mokuākea National Marine Monument, it was done without the participation of Native Hawaiian people.” It further states the name Papahānau-mokuākea “was the name the your administra-

Moving toward the center

Is President-elect Obama tilting toward the “center”? Meaning, by doing so is he positioning himself between the liberals and the conservatives and subsequently, among other promises he made, moving away from the vow he made during the Democrat Party campaign run-up to the presidency, to cut billions of dollars from U.S. military funds?

Here’s my revised reasoning.

I wrote a letter to the editor about senator Obama on Nov.10, 2008, titled “Terrorism with Obama,” lamenting his vow to gut our military during the Democratic campaign, when he becomes our president. This “gutting” will not only threaten the Mariana Islands’ hoped-for military buildup and with it the economic windfall certain to follow in the coming years, but also impair measures to protect the islands from external and internal threats, whether from terrorists a mere 1,500 miles due west of us or from the three communist nations bordering the Pacific that have guns and missiles pointing in our direction. And now he is the President of the United States.

So what does the coming four years bode for us?

In my letter I offered to send to interested readers a YouTube video of Obama unequivocally stating he would cut the military budget.

Fodder for comedy

I’ve been searching for fodder to fill my comedy notebook. Now, I turn to my cousin, Chief Tano Gregorio Cruz Jr., to gather comedy material from his latest diatribes or vitriolic and baseless accusations. I’m afraid it is now a hobby and, primo, I will always have the last laugh.

For instance, in recent months people would walk hurriedly into their office in both sectors, fearful of being “impeached” by Chief Tano. I mean, he wanted legislators “impeached,” a tale of his lack of understanding of the impeachment process. It’s also a grand tale that he must have flunked his civic courses at MHS. Is this the case, Chief Tano, or can you lay claim that you were on the top 10 of your graduating class? I was student body president, sir. Can you match this with your high school stint?

Rebooting our economy

It is obvious that we must reboot our economy, like what the rest of America is trying to accomplish. The “capitalistic experiment” has gotten too big and too volatile. Now they are trying to figure out how to correct an experiment that has gone awry. The complexity of the mainland’s economy makes for extremely difficult decisions due to the many nuances involved but here in the CNMI is very much like a “test tube.” I realized the test tube phenomenon when I first arrived in the Marianas almost two decades ago and I often wondered why the economy wasn’t distributing the wealth proportionately and why there was virtually no growth in such a perfect test tube environment. I soon realized the answer was complacency with a status quo attitude and no real desire to experiment.

Just as I predicted, when the Democrats passed the federalization bill, our government took a complacent attitude about the economy and put all their efforts into shifting the focus and the blame toward the feds. All our efforts are focused on fighting federalization and it showed me a symptom of the government that also prevails with PSS—the inability to multitask, driven by the old and outdated methodology of one-thing-at-a-time attitude that will keep us behind. The government has *not* brought the quality of life in the CNMI up to a level equal to the mainland and the history of our test scores in education will also bear this out after almost 30 years. But what really got me during all the exchanges between the CNMI and

tion picked for the Monument.”

This is typical WESPAC misinformation. The name “Papahānau-mokuākea” was chosen by the Native Hawaiian working group of the North-Western Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve Advisory Council. This Reserve was the precursor to the Monument. President Clinton in an Executive Order, designated that three members of this Council should be Native Hawaiians, with one seat reserved for a Kupuna or elder. WESPAC, on the other hand, has no such requirement to have a Hawaiian on its Council.

The Native Hawaiian Working group met over the course of more than six months to consider several names for the Monument. The debate amongst Hawaiians was fierce but amiable, ultimately choosing Papahānau-mokuākea. Hawaiians were at the forefront of the creation of the Reserve and continue to be consulted and have a place on the Management Board of the Monument.

The largest group of cultural practitioners in Hawaii, Ilio ula o ka lani, has demonstrated its support for the Monument by having representatives fly to Washington on numerous occasions and by

The response by those readers desiring to view that very chilling YouTube video of him making that promise—letters from Saipan, Guam and around the world—has been overwhelming. They cannot believe he did say it, and they wonder why the new U.S. president would leave us (America) defenseless as did president Carter from 1977 to 1981.

But something strange has happened since Obama won the presidency: he shifted into neutral.

President-elect Obama, by his ongoing selection of Cabinet members, is surrounding himself with appointees that will leave behind the far-left, anti-America faction that now dominate both houses of Congress. President-elect Obama has nominated (as of this writing) not his personal “cronies” of ill reputation, but those of pragmatic bent and with deep experiences (Washington insiders) in matters he is decidedly weak in—not the idealism and the “change” he portrayed that won him accolades during the run-up to the presidency (which sent the liberals jumping up and down in glee)—and of a centrist view closely knit with former President Clinton who, too, moved to the center after his election and (in my personal opin-

Then there’s his Napoleonic attitude, convinced he’s establishing healthy discourse on issues that are way above his head. He’s done nothing but present disoriented and shallow views. When CUC disconnected his power, he viciously attacked the head of the utility agency as though he has sterling credentials in the operation of a utility company. Tony Muña graduated at the top of his class in a military academy, sir. Where did you go to college or did you ever enter one for that matter? Eh, you for da kine talk too much bradda when you for do better to speak it, yeah?

And so you have an established behavioral pattern I could only expect from a vicious stray attack dog that even chases his own shadows heedlessly. What an accomplishment! At the end of the

attending close to a hundred meetings on the process. On one occasion, organizing a 10,000-person march on Waikiki to show support for the process.

Please do not allow the misinformation of the eight people on the Aha Moku Council, created by WESPAC, who have not consulted with Native Hawaiians as described in their organizational documents, to influence the people of the CNMI. Check out the facts, consider your needs and the future legacy that you leave for the children of the CNMI.

WESPAC has a direct state in the matter and that is the reason for the misinformation campaign. Should President Bush and the people of the CNMI approve a Monument, then WESPAC loses jurisdiction over fisheries in the Monument. For WESPAC, it’s all about them, and not about you or the resources of CNMI. Don’t be fooled!

William J. Aila Jr.
Wai’anae, Hawaii

ion) did a good job the eight years in office. Without the personal (sexual) scandals that dogged his tenure, that is.

Though president-elect Obama desires to bring new ideas to the table, he is wise enough to understand now is not the time to experiment and has moved to deal with military and foreign policies from the center—without the political extremism he has vocalized. That alone tells us something about him. His learning curve is sharper than I originally visualized. And I am not as much concerned with the other political doubts that have been heaped upon Obama, as I am worried about that which can immeasurably affect us here in the Marianas. Will the new president really govern from the center—which would help us here in the Pacific—and not follow up on his early threats to gut our defenses?

Where will we be after President Obama is sworn in on Jan. 20, 2009? His game plan is evolving dramatically. We can only wait and watch. Only time and patience can tell.

Lee Andersen
Chalan Kanoa, Saipan

day, you sit alone pondering your descent into that painful feeling of rejection, all self-inflicted.

Primo, people are people! Unfortunately, you have one grand Plebian fantasy as to venture into tricky and dangerous terrain, attacking decent people with savagery as though you’re one superhuman. I respectfully disagree and if perchance an opportunity arises to make you a BETTER rather than a BITTER person in perpetuity, I will gladly hand you the olive leaf. After all, I am a good Christian and love my enemies, too.

John S. DelRosario Jr.
via e-mail

be full contributors to our economy (paying rent, purchasing cars, paying power bills and other cost of living contributions). I realize people do come here to work so they can send money home and they will, it will just be less but they will also have a better quality of life during their stay. Everyone who works in the CNMI must be a full contributor to our economy.






So for those who want to fight about something, please fight to get our importing rights back. We should have been mad at the feds for ending the WTO, which was a “legitimate” fight. I’m sure that getting our right to unlimited imports to the mainland will bring back previous investors and do a lot to help jumpstart our economy. But we have a very small window of five to seven years or more to be competitive before the increases in wages will start to have a very detrimental effect on our garment industry. So we must put our foot to the gas and really get moving. The good thing is we have a President and Congress now that may actually help us if we can stop fighting long enough to try and work with the federal government. Our new president also wants to bring back foreign jobs to American soil, I just hope common sense and merits will prevail in the debate over this on Capitol Hill.

Ambrose M. Bennett
Kagman, Saipan

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲88° ▼78°	▲88° ▼78°	▲88° ▼78°	▲88° ▼78°	▲88° ▼77°

Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Mostly Sunny	▲85 ▼77
Palau	Showers	▲85 ▼78
Yap	Thunderstorms	▲86 ▼76
Chuuk	Partly Sunny	▲88 ▼78
Pohnpei	Showers	▲88 ▼75
Kosrae	Showers	▲88 ▼79
Majuro	Rain	▲83 ▼77

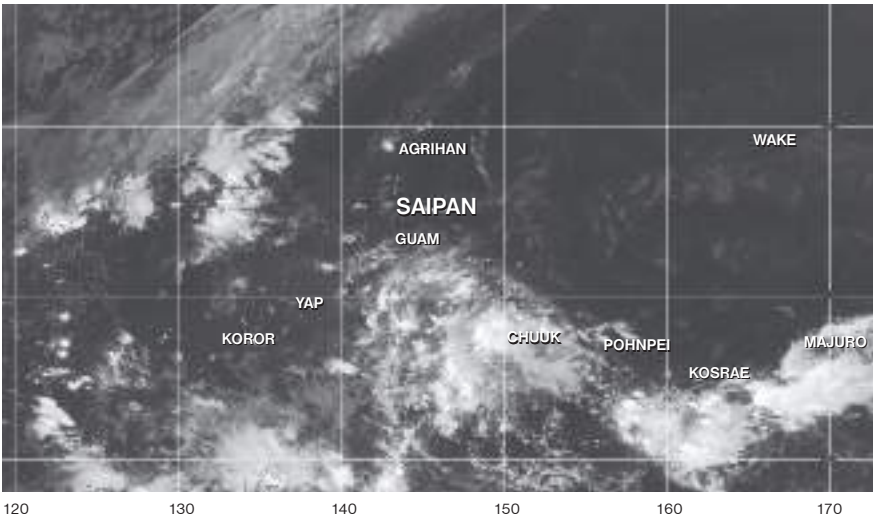
Around The Globe

Auckland	Partly Sunny	▲71 ▼60
Beijing	Sunny	▲45 ▼35
Hong Kong	Sunny	▲73 ▼64
Honolulu	Showers	▲80 ▼68
London	Showers	▲41 ▼37
Los Angeles	Sunny	▲78 ▼54
Manila	Mostly Cloudy	▲86 ▼75
Melbourne	Mostly Cloudy	▲67 ▼55
Miami	Showers	▲76 ▼58
New York	Showers	▲53 ▼39
Osaka	Sunny	▲60 ▼41
Paris	Showers	▲39 ▼36
Pusan	Mostly Sunny	▲60 ▼41
Rome	Showers	▲55 ▼40
Salem	Cloudy	▲54 ▼44
San Francisco	Partly Sunny	▲60 ▼50
Seoul	Sunny	▲50 ▼26
Tokyo	Cloudy	▲59 ▼45
Washington, DC	Showers	▲53 ▼37

Tides

Saipan Harbor		
4:15AM Today	Low Tide:	0.2 Feet
11:43AM Today	High Tide:	1.8 Feet
5:09PM Today	Low Tide:	1.4 Feet
9:10PM Today	High Tide:	1.7 Feet

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:30PM, MONDAY, DEC. 1, 2008

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A stationary front enters the discussion area at 25N150E and extends southwestward to a low pressure system centered near 18N130E. Extensive cloudiness and patchy rain are seen along and northwest of this boundary to beyond 25N. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are found in the vicinity of the low pressure between 16N and 21N from 130E to 134E. A near-equatorial trough stretches east-southeastward from the Southern Philippines to end at EQ145E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are occurring along the western portion of the trough axis southwest of Koror between the equator and 7N from 130E to 134E. A low-level trough runs northward from 3N142E to 11N142E. Scattered showers associated with this trough are present over Yap within 105 miles of a line from 14N135E to 9N138E to 8N146E. Another low-level trough reaches northwestward from EQ155E to 6N151E. Scattered showers and a few thunderstorms are forming over Chuuk within 170 miles of a line from 7N150E to EQ154E. Trade-wind convergence is causing scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms in two areas. One area is over kosrae but south of Majuro within 160 miles of a line from 3N160E to 5N173E. The second area is situated east of Majuro between 5N and 9n from 174E to 180. The remnants of an old shear line is producing scattered showers from southwest to southeast of Wake Island within 160 miles of a line from 18N156E to 13N166E to 17N178E.

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:28AM	5:45 PM
Wednesday	6:28AM	5:45 PM
Thursday	6:29AM	5:45 PM
Friday	6:29AM	5:46 PM
Saturday	6:30AM	5:46 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	9:54AM	9:26 PM
Wednesday	10:34AM	8:16 PM
Thursday	11:13AM	11:05 PM
Friday	11:50AM	11:55 PM
Saturday	12:26AM	

GET YOUR PICTURES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PUBLISHED—FOR FREE

The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

- PICTURES**
 - ISLAND SNAPSHOTS Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
 - BIRTHDAY GREETINGS A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
 - BUSINESS Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
 - SAMU'T SARI Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
 - TRAVELOGUE Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS

- Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

REQUIREMENTS

- For pictures:**
 - Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
 - Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
 - Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
 - Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
 - For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.
- For announcements:**
 - Must have complete details (who, what, where, when),

- the name of contact person, and a phone number.
- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

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- Fax: (670) 235-3740
- Mail: PMB 34, P.O. Box 10001, Saipan, CNMI 96950
- Drop off: 2nd Floor, CIC Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan
- To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

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- The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.
- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

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ADVERTISING For inquiries contact (670) 235-2769. E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF NOVEMBER 19, 2008

DEPARTURES	ARRIVALS
Saipan-Rota CO9597 11:50am 12:25pm 1,7	Rota-Saipan CO 9598 3:25am 4:00am 5,6
Saipan-Guam CO9317 5:00am 5:50am Daily CO9313 8:30am 9:20am Daily CO9597 11:50am 1:20pm 1,7 via Rota CO9601 12:30pm 1:20pm 2,3,4,5,6 CO9603 3:30pm 4:20pm Daily CO9605 6:30pm 7:20pm Daily CO9599 9:30pm 10:20pm Daily	Guam-Saipan CO 9316 2:30am 3:20am 1,2,3,4,7 CO9598 2:30am 4:00am 5,6 via Rota CO9596 7:00am 7:50am Daily CO9600 10:20am 11:10am Daily CO9602 2:00pm 2:50pm Daily CO9604 5:00pm 5:50pm Daily CO9606 8:00pm 8:50pm Daily
Saipan-Narita NW 099 5:00am 7:40am Daily NW 078 8:25am 1:30pm 2,3,4,5,6,7 NW 075 4:55pm 7:30pm Daily	Narita-Saipan NW 076 10:15am 2:40pm Daily NW 077 6:25pm 1:25am+1 2,3,4,5,6,7 NW 100 8:45pm 1:15am+1 Daily
Saipan-Osaka NW 083 4:30pm 7:20pm Daily	Osaka-Saipan NW 084 10:40am 3:10pm Daily
Saipan-Nagoya NW 078 8:25am 11:05am Daily	Nagoya-Saipan NW 077 9:00pm 1:25am+1 Daily
Saipan-Incheon OZ 604 2:10am 6:00am 1 OZ 604 2:40am 6:30am 2,3,4,5,6,7 OZ 606 3:20pm 7:00pm Daily	Incheon-Saipan OZ 605 9:00am 2:20pm Daily OZ 603 7:40pm 1:00am+1 7 OZ 603 8:10pm 1:30am+1 1,2,3,4,5,6
Saipan-Busan OZ 608 3:50am 7:20am 1,4,5,7	Busan-Saipan OZ 607 9:30pm 2:40am+1 3,4,6,7
Saipan-Shanghai FM 844 2:50am 5:40am 2,6	Shanghai-Saipan FM 843 7:15pm 1:50am+1 1,5
Rota-Guam CO 9597 12:50pm 1:20pm 1,7	Guam-Rota CO 9598 2:30am 3:00am 5,6
Guam-Manila CO 893 5:50pm 9:10pm 3,5 via Koror CO 933 8:00pm 9:40pm Daily PR 111 6:00am 7:50am 1,2,4,6,7	Manila-Guam CO 892 10:10pm 5:30am+1 3,5 via Koror CO 934 11:10pm 4:40am+1 Daily PR 110 10:10pm 4:00am+1 1,3,5,6,7
Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CO: Continental; FM: Shanghai Airlines; PR: Philippine Airlines; NW: Northwest; OZ: Asiana ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)	

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency	Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota				FRE 113	11:40am	11:50am	Daily
FRE 100 7:00am 7:30am Daily				FRE 115	1:00pm	1:10pm	Daily
Rota-Saipan				FRE 117	2:30pm	2:40pm	Daily
FRE 100 7:50am 8:20am Daily				FRE 119	4:00pm	4:10pm	Daily
Saipan-Rota				FRE 121	4:40pm	4:50pm	Daily
FRE 200 9:00am 9:30am Daily				FRE 123 *	5:40pm	5:50pm	Daily
Rota-Guam				FRE 125 *	6:00pm	6:10pm	Daily
FRE 200 9:50am 10:15am Daily				Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**			
Guam-Rota				FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
FRE 300 4:00pm 4:30pm Daily				FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
Rota-Saipan				FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 300 4:50pm 5:25pm Daily				FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
Saipan-Rota				FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 400 6:00pm 6:30pm Daily				FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
Rota-Guam				FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 400 6:45pm 7:15pm Daily				FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
Saipan-Tinian				FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
FRE 101 6:45am 6:55am Daily				FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 103 7:30am 7:40am Daily				FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
FRE 105 8:00am 8:10am Daily				FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE 107 8:40am 8:50am Daily				FRE 126	6:20pm	6:30pm	Daily
FRE 109* 9:10am 9:20am Daily							
FRE 111* 10:45am 10:55am Daily							



NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

Business

Holiday shopping season off to modest start

NEW YORK (AP)—Deep discounts on everything from sweaters to TVs drove shoppers out of hibernation for the Thanksgiving weekend, but the buying was tempered and sales for the traditional start of the holiday season appear at best in line with stores' low expectations.

The sales receipts, however, came at the expense of profits, and merchants are facing a big challenge exciting financially strapped shoppers for the rest of the season that's expected to be the weakest in decades.

The nation's retailers—who since mid-September have suffered from the most dramatic falloff in spending in decades amid a ballooning financial crisis—opened their stores as early as midnight on Thursday, holding their breath wondering if shoppers would show up for the pre-dawn specials. But while the crowds did come out, analysts say they were thinner than last year, and according to some accounts, business fell off sharply for the remainder of the weekend.

Shoppers were also focused on bargains and smaller-ticket, practical items like blenders and video games, as they worry about layoffs, tightening credit and shrinking retirement funds.

Even online spending, once a bright spot in retailing, has been hit hard by economic woes in recent months. ComScore, an Internet research company, reported Sunday that online spending



Shoppers are reflected as they enter the Nike Store on Chicago's Magnificent Mile Saturday, Nov. 29, 2008.

was up a modest 2 percent for the combined Thanksgiving Day and Friday, compared with the year-ago period.

"I've cut my budget in half. I usually have a spending limit of \$50 per person, but this year, it's \$25," said Laura Bentley, of Miami, who was at the local Dolphin Mall on Saturday, her first day of holiday shopping.

Manno and Poun Sam of Houston, who had just purchased some toys, including a Crayola coloring game and

a stuffed animal, at a Wal-Mart store in suburban Houston on Saturday, said they were trying to stay within a \$500 budget.

"We're not buying anything fancy," said Manno Sam, an assembly-line worker. "We can't afford it."

New York-based retail consultant Walter Loeb said he expects sales for the weekend to be below year-ago levels, based on discussions this weekend with key executives from discounters and department stores.

But he added, "It wasn't as bad as some feared. ... People were buying but they bought cheap, and the results were not as good."

Marshal Cohen, chief industry analyst at NPD Group, a market research group, who had a network of analysts at 53 mall locations across the country this weekend, said that "the holiday started off with some promise but quickly moved to concern."

"It could have been a disaster, but

it wasn't," he said, noting that he estimates that the weekend's sales were at best even with the same holiday weekend a year ago.

Karen MacDonald, a spokeswoman at Taubman Centers Inc., which operates 24 malls in 11 states, said that based on a sampling of malls, business on Friday was anywhere from unchanged to up mid-single digits. But on Saturday, sales were unchanged to down slightly.

"Friday was encouraging, but Saturday wasn't as good as we hoped," she said.

But Toys R Us Chief Executive Jerry Storch reported on Sunday that customer traffic was at least as strong this past weekend as the Thanksgiving weekend a year ago, and said he was "definitely pleased with sales."

Geoffrey Webb, director of advertising and sales promotions at K-B Toys Inc., said that sales for the weekend were equal or slightly better than last year.

"We are very encouraged by the response," he said.

A more complete sales picture of how the Thanksgiving shopping weekend fared won't be known until Thursday when the nation's retailers report November same-store sales, or sales at stores opened at least a year.

According to preliminary figures released Saturday by ShopperTrak RCT, a research firm that tracks total retail sales at more than 50,000 outlets, sales rose 3 percent to \$10.6 billion on Friday from the Black Friday a year ago.

Autoworker chief pleads for government aid

WASHINGTON (AP)—The head of the United Auto Workers made a public plea Sunday for government help for U.S. carmakers as the Big Three put the final touches on stabilization plans to submit to Congress.

"We cannot afford to see these companies fail," said Ron Gettelfinger, the UAW chief, calling on Congress to approve the aid during a special session the week of Dec. 8.

Gettelfinger said a \$25 billion rescue plan for the carmakers is "not a bailout, this is a loan—a bridge loan—that will get us through until we can take a longer-term look at exactly what needs to be done in the industry."

Democratic leaders are demanding blueprints from Chrysler LLC, Ford Motor Co. and General Motors Corp. before they will schedule votes on any new federal aid. The plans, due Tuesday, are to be scrutinized at a Senate hearing Wednesday and a House hearing on Friday.

If lawmakers like what they see, Congress may reconvene the following week to consider the auto bailout.

Members of Congress remain deeply divided on the aid, with many in both parties wary of supporting another costly government rescue on the heels of the \$700 billion Wall Street bailout.

Sen. Lindsey O. Graham, R-S.C., said he would not back the help for the U.S. auto industry.

"I don't believe it is a good idea to take \$25 billion and give it to the three major car companies, which I think have a business plan that's doomed to fail," he said.

International hotels draw elites and terror threat

LONDON (AP)—Consider how a city looks to a terrorist seeking targets. There's the airport—inviting, but heavily secured. There's the U.S. Embassy, perimeter guarded by crack local forces and Marines. And there's the plush international hotel, open to anyone with a decent outfit and money for a cup of coffee.

Across the world, the finest hotels draw foreign businessmen, droves of tourists, and local movers and shakers who crowd the restaurants and bars to see and be seen. There are society weddings, banquets and even "Sweet Sixteen" birthday parties for the daughters of the well-to-do.

In places where Western-style amenities are rare, international hotels are often the most vital connection to the rest of the world. Their business model demands openness and accessibility for visitors and guests, making total security virtually impossible despite security barriers, metal detectors and high-tech surveillance gear.

That's why, experts say, hotels have



A bouquet of flowers brought by a local resident for the victims of the attacks, is placed on the pavement as Indian police officers stand guard near the landmark Taj Hotel, background, in Mumbai, India, Sunday Nov. 30, 2008.

been attacked by terrorists in Pakistan, Jordan, Afghanistan and now Mumbai, India, where commandos battled security forces for three days in a deadly rampage focused on the renowned Taj

Mahal and Oberoi hotels.

"There is obviously a trend for hotels to be targets," said Christopher Newberry, general manager of the Serena Hotel in Kabul, Afghanistan,

where three militants slaughtered eight guests in January.

The Marriott in Islamabad, Pakistan is being rebuilt with a 16-foot high security wall to protect against bomb blasts after a massive truck bomb explosion in September that killed 54 people and wounded more than 250. A series of Pakistani hotels have been targeted in attacks dating back to 2002, when 14 people were killed by militants targeting the Sheraton in Karachi.

Security has been tightened around hotels in Islamabad, with direct access to hotels blocked by heavy concrete barriers. Motorists have to drive past surveillance cameras and over a bomb detector to get in, and paramilitary troops are deployed at kiosks built of sand bags.

"The threat against diplomatic targets persists, but due to target hardening, the terrorists seek to attack international hotels," terrorism analyst Rohan Gunaratna said in a report on the bombing of the Islamabad Marriott. "As Westerners frequent such hotels, they should be considered second embassies."

Wall St. looks to extend rally; consumers in focus

NEW YORK (AP)—Wall Street will look to build on the strongest weekly performance for stocks since 1932 on Monday, with investors focused on how recession-minded shoppers fared at the malls and a raft of government data that could give a clearer picture of the economy.

So far, it appears consumers still opened their wallets and might have met analysts' gloomy projections for the kick-

off of the holiday shopping season. Preliminary reports show that sales got off to a decent start on Black Friday, the day after Thanksgiving, traditionally one of the biggest shopping days of the year.

Investors will be watching reports from the nation's biggest stores, along with economic data such as November's payroll report, to determine how deeply the nation's economic downturn has cut into spending. A more complete sales

picture of how the Thanksgiving weekend fared won't be known until Thursday, when the nation's retailers report November same-store sales, considered a key indicator of retailer's health.

"It looks like we may have talked ourselves into an overly gloomy outlook for this year's holiday sales," said Peter Cohan of Peter Cohan & Associates. "Many of those who fear they'll lose their jobs may decide to enjoy the

holidays while they still can. Next year might not be as good."

Volume at the New York Stock Exchange and Nasdaq are expected to return to normal levels with traders returning to work after the holiday. Some give-back is expected after last week's big run, but investors might also build on those gains if they're able to get a positive reading on consumer spending and get past any negative economic reports.

Nation

Bush sends Rice to India in aftermath of attacks

WASHINGTON (AP)—President George W. Bush on Sunday dispatched Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to New Delhi in support of India following the terrorist attacks that killed nearly 200 people, including six Americans.

Rice and Bush wanted an opportunity “to express the condolences of the American government directly to the Indian government and the Indian people,” Rice spokesman Sean McCormack said.

Rice was scheduled to leave Sunday night for a meeting in London and then travel to Brussels for a NATO gathering. On Wednesday, following the NATO meeting, she will travel to New Delhi, according to her new itinerary.

“Secretary Rice’s visit to India is a further demonstration of the United States’ commitment to stand in solidarity with the people of India as we all work together to hold these extremists accountable,” White House press secretary Dana Perino said in a statement.

Rice had planned to attend the meeting of NATO foreign ministers Tuesday and Wednesday, with talks focusing on a broad international agenda, including Afghanistan, Georgia and the Ukraine. From there she was to visit Rome, Helsinki and Copenhagen, but it was unclear whether the trip to India would cancel or only postpone those visits.

Rice spoke with President-elect Bar-



Demonstrators sit down on Market Street in San Francisco, Sunday, Nov. 30, 2008 in condemnation of the terrorist attacks in Mumbai, India. AP

ack Obama about India earlier on Sunday, McCormack said. It was the third phone conversation between the two since the attacks. Rice has also been in daily phone contact with Indian and

Pakistani officials.

The announcement of Rice’s trip came hours after Bush assured India’s leader that the U.S. government will put its full weight behind the investiga-

tion into the attacks in Mumbai.

Earlier Sunday, a Republican senator endorsed a campaign suggestion from President-elect Barack Obama—appointment of a special envoy, perhaps

former President Bill Clinton, to the disputed region of Kashmir—as the U.S. seeks to ease tensions between India and its nuclear-armed neighbor Pakistan.

The lone gunman captured by police after the attacks told authorities he belonged to a Pakistani militant group with links to Kashmir, a senior Indian police officer said. India has blamed “elements” from Pakistan for the 60-hour siege during which suspected Muslim militants hit 10 sites across India’s financial capital, leaving at least 174 dead.

Bush told India’s prime minister, Manmohan Singh, in a telephone call that “out of this tragedy can come an opportunity to hold these extremists accountable and demonstrate the world’s shared commitment to combat terrorism,” White House spokesman Gordon Johndroe said in a statement.

In addition to the Americans killed in the coordinated shooting rampage in India’s financial capital, the foreigners among the dead included Germans, Canadians, Israelis and nationals from Britain, Italy, Japan, China, Thailand, Australia and Singapore.

Bush told the prime minister that “he has directed the state and defense departments along with other federal agencies to devote the necessary resources and personnel to this situation,” Johndroe said.

Obama turns to friends and foes for top posts

WASHINGTON (AP)—President-elect Barack Obama plans on Monday to announce six experienced hands to fill top administration posts, moving at record speed to name the leadership team that will guide his presidency through a time of war and recession.

His selections include longtime advisers and political foes alike, most notably Democratic primary rival Hillary Rodham Clinton as secretary of state and President Bush’s defense secretary, Robert Gates, staying in his current post. The two were among six who Obama planned to announce at a news conference in Chicago, Democratic officials said.

The officials said Obama also planned to name Washington lawyer Eric Holder as attorney general and Arizona Gov. Janet Napolitano as homeland security secretary. He also planned to announce



In this March 3, 1997 file photo, the then-U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia Eric Holder is seen in his Washington office. AP

two senior foreign policy positions outside the Cabinet: campaign foreign policy adviser Susan Rice as U.N. ambas-

sador and retired Marine Gen. James L. Jones as national security adviser.

The Democratic officials disclosed the plans Sunday on a condition of anonymity because they were not authorized for public release ahead of the news conference. Those names had been discussed before for those jobs, but the officials confirmed that Obama will make them official Monday in his hometown.

Obama also has settled on former Senate Democratic leader Tom Daschle to be his secretary of Health and Human Services and New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson to be Commerce secretary, but those announcements are not yet official. Last week, he named key members of his economic team, including Timothy Geithner, president of Federal Reserve Bank of New York, as Treasury secretary.

Is gay the new black? Marriage ban spurs debate

NEW YORK (AP)—Gay is the new black, say the protest signs and magazine covers, casting the gay marriage battle as the last frontier of equal rights for all.

Gay marriage is not a civil right, opponents counter, insisting that minority status comes from who you are rather than what you do.

The gay rights movement entered a

new era when Barack Obama was elected the first black president the same day that voters in California and Florida passed referendums to prevent gays and lesbians from marrying, while Arizonans turned down civil unions and Arkansans said no to adoptions by same-sex couples.

Racism was defanged by Obama’s triumph, leaving gays as perhaps the

last group of Americans claiming that their basic rights are being systematically denied.

“Black people are equal now, and gay people aren’t,” said Emil Wilbekin, a black gay man and the editor of *Giant* magazine. “I always have this discussion with my friends: What’s worse, being a black man or a black gay man?”

Winter weather slows travel in Midwest, Northeast

CHICAGO (AP)—A storm system moving across the Great Lakes delivered Illinois’ first snowstorm of the season Sunday and forced the cancellation of more than 50 flights at Chicago’s O’Hare International Airport.

Low visibility also caused delays of up to 90 minutes for flights, aviation officials said.

National Weather Service officials

said the storm could dump up to 8 inches of snow in some northern Illinois counties.

The Federal Aviation Administration said that airports around the country have been affected by Sunday’s weather.

Flights arriving at and departing from New York City’s major airports were delayed an average of three hours because of foul weather, said officials

with the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.

Snowy weather also created travel problems in Colorado. Blowing snow and ice closed parts of eastbound Interstate 70 through the mountains as holiday travelers headed home, and at least four people were injured in separate accidents on icy roads in the eastern part of the state, authorities said.

ACROSS THE NATION

Students lie, cheat, steal, but say they’re good

NEW YORK (AP)—In the past year, 30 percent of U.S. high school students have stolen from a store and 64 percent have cheated on a test, according to a new, large-scale survey suggesting that Americans are too apathetic about ethical standards. Educators reacting to the findings questioned any suggestion that today’s young people are less honest than previous generations, but several agreed that intensified pressures are prompting many students to cut corners. “The competition is greater, the pressures on kids have increased dramatically,” said Mel Riddle of the National Association of Secondary School Principals. “They have opportunities their predecessors didn’t have (to cheat). The temptation is greater.” The Josephson Institute, a Los Angeles-based ethics institute, surveyed 29,760 students at 100 randomly selected high schools nationwide, both public and private. All students in the selected schools were given the survey in class; their anonymity was assured.

Space shuttle Endeavour finishes 16-day mission

EDWARDS AIR FORCE BASE, Calif. (AP)—Space shuttle Endeavour and its seven astronauts safely returned to Earth on Sunday, taking a detour to sunny California after storms hit the main landing strip in Florida. Endeavour wrapped up a 16-day trip that left the international space station freshly remodeled and capable of housing bigger crews. The shuttle dropped off all kinds of home

improvement equipment, including a new bathroom, kitchenette, exercise machine, two sleeping quarters and a recycling system designed to convert astronauts’ urine and sweat into drinking water. But the mission wasn’t without its problems. Astronaut Heidemarie Stefanyshyn-Piper let go of a \$100,000 tool bag during the first spacewalk, muttering “Oh, great” as it floated away. And Endeavour’s astronauts also had to put in extra effort to get the urine processor working.

Vt. sex offender to be released after only 3 years

BURLINGTON, Vt. (AP)—A sex offender whose lenient sentence for molesting a child led to a crackdown on punishment for sexual predators in Vermont will likely be released from prison next month, state corrections officials say. Mark Hulett is due for release Jan. 2, but will remain under the state Corrections Department’s supervision for life and could return to prison if he commits another offense or violates conditions of his release. Judge Edward Cashman was criticized by lawmakers and Gov. Jim Douglas when he sentenced Hulett, then 34, to 60 days for sexually assaulting the daughter of a family friend numerous times during a four-year period beginning when she was 6. Cashman, now retired, said he had wanted a short prison sentence so Hulett could get the sex-offender treatment that the Corrections Department would not provide behind bars. After the department changed its policy, the judge lengthened the sentence to three years.

Asia

India clears last Mumbai siege site

MUMBAI, India (AP)—Authorities finished removing bodies from the bullet-and-grenade-scarred Taj Mahal hotel Monday, the final site of the Mumbai siege to be cleared, and said the death toll from the attack stood at 172 killed.

Security forces were scouring the 565 room hotel for booby traps and bodies, and declared the landmark building cleared two

days after they killed the last three militants holed up inside following a deadly, three-day rampage in India's financial center.

"We were apprehensive about more bodies being found. But this is not likely—all rooms in the Taj have been opened and checked," said Maharashtra state government spokesman Bhushan Gagrani.

The army had already

cleared two other sites, the five-star Oberoi hotel and the headquarters of an ultra-Orthodox Jewish Center.

The only gunman captured after the 60-hour terrorist siege of Mumbai said he belonged to a Pakistani militant group with links to the disputed Himalayan region of Kashmir, a senior police officer said.

The gunman was one of 10

who paralyzed the city in an attack that killed at least 172 people and wounded 239 and revealed the weakness of In-

dia's security apparatus. India's top law enforcement official resigned Sunday, bowing to growing criticism that the attackers appeared better trained, better coordinated and better armed than police.

The announcement blaming

militant group Lashkar-e-Taiba, threatened to escalate tensions between India and Pakistan. However, Indian officials have been cautious about accusing Pakistan's government of complicity.

Lashkar, long seen as a creation of the Pakistani intelligence service to help fight India in disputed Kashmir, was banned in Pakistan in 2002 under pressure from the U.S., a year after Washington and Britain listed it a terrorist group. It is since believed to have emerged under another name, Jamaat-ud-Dawa, though that group has denied links to the Mumbai attack.

As more details of the response to the attack emerged, a picture formed of woefully unprepared security forces.

"These guys could do it next week again in Mumbai and our responses would be exactly the same," said Ajai Sahni, head of the New Delhi-based Institute for Conflict Management who has close ties to India's police and intelligence.

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh promised to strengthen maritime and air security and look into creating a new federal investigative agency.

Joint Police Commissioner Rakesh Maria said the only known surviving gunman, Ajmal Qasab, told police he was trained at a Lashkar-e-Taiba camp in Pakistan.

"Lashkar-e-Taiba is behind the terrorist acts in the city," he said.

Mumbai cop, left for dead, rides with gunmen

MUMBAI, India (AP)—The militants waited in the shadows for the police van to pass, and when it slowed down in the narrow road, they sprayed it with gunfire.

The gunmen opened the doors and dumped five slumped officers' bodies into the streets, then piled into the van to continue their siege.

What they did not know was that two officers, including constable Arun Jadhav, were in the backseat, alive.

Jadhav was taken on a chilling 10-minute ride through the dark streets of Mumbai with some of the gunmen who had launched a siege that would last for 60 more hours and leave at least 174 people dead.

While one of the men drove the van, another pointed his rifle out the window and fired on a crowd milling outside a cinema. Later, he threw a grenade outside a state government building.

The young gunmen said little during the harrowing drive, but spoke Hindi with a strong Punjabi, north-Indian accent.

They scoffed when they saw

that the police officers they had killed had been wearing bullet-proof vests.

"One of them laughed and said, 'Look, they're wearing jackets,'" Jadhav said.

He was in the backseat, with an officer who was unconscious, both left for dead. Jadhav had been hit by three bullets, two of which left his hands nearly paralyzed.

At one point, a cell phone trilled from the pocket of Jadhav's colleague. The gunman in the front seat turned around and fired.

"He didn't even look back properly, he just fired," Jadhav said. "I think my colleague had been still alive. He died with those bullets."

Before the carjacking, Jadhav and his colleagues—including Hemant Karkare, head of the Anti-Terror Squad—were racing to respond to emergency calls of a shooting inside Mumbai's main railway station, the attack that began the siege. Then a report came in that a car was seen speeding away from the terminal, and Jadhav's van rushed to follow it.

While they were searching for the gunmen, the gunmen found them.

From the backseat, Jadhav could not reach his weapon.

"I kept trying to lift my gun, but I couldn't reach it," he said.

Finally, one of the van's tires went flat, and the gunmen abandoned the vehicle.

They stopped another car, pulled out the driver and drove away, he said.

Jadhav climbed forward and used the police radio to call for backup and tell the authorities what direction the gunmen had gone.

Minutes later, a team of officers blockaded a road lining the coast, and opened fire at the hijacked car. One gunman was killed and another arrested—the only militant to be captured during the entire two-and-a-half day ordeal.

Jadhav is now recuperating from his injuries at a city hospital, and replaying the episode again and again in his mind.

"I wish I could have lifted my gun," he said.



Mourners gather for a memorial to pay tribute to Mumbai police officers who lost their lives in the recent attacks in Mumbai, India, Sunday Nov. 30, 2008.

Airlines fly empty planes out of Bangkok

BANGKOK, Thailand (AP)—Airlines were flying dozens of empty planes out of Bangkok's international airport Monday as authorities struggled to clear it of protesters to reopen international links and move 100,000 travelers stranded by the crisis, the airport said.

Some 30 planes had been flown out starting Sunday and an additional 50 were to be moved later Monday, some of them to protest-free airports elsewhere in Thailand so that stranded travelers can fly out of the country, said Serirat Prasutont, director of the Airports Authority of Thailand.

Thailand's political crisis escalated Sunday when thousands of pro-government activists converged on Bangkok to counter rival protesters who seized the city's two airports last week and have forced the prime minister to run the country from outside the capital.

Explosions Sunday targeting the anti-government protesters injured at least 51 people, officials said, with blasts hitting the prime minister's compound in Bangkok where the protesters

have camped out since August and a road near the occupied domestic airport.

Neither the army nor Thailand's revered king have stepped in to resolve the crisis—or offered the firm backing that Prime Minister Somchai Wongsawat needs to resolve the leadership vacuum.

The problem runs deeper than the airport closures. Political violence has added to the sense of drift bordering on anarchy that pervades the country's administration, and has damaged Thailand's international image.

Food crunch opens doors to bioengineered crops

KUNMING, China (AP)—Zeng Yawen's outdoor laboratory in the terraced hills of southern China is a trove of genetic potential—rice that thrives in unusually cool temperatures, high altitudes or in dry soil; rice rich in calcium, vitamins or iron.

"See these plants? They can tolerate the cold," Zeng says as he walks through a checkerboard of test fields sown with different rice varieties on the outskirts of Kunming, capital of southwestern China's Yunnan province.

"We can extract the cold-tolerant gene from this plant and

use it in a genetically manipulated variety to improve its cold tolerance," Zeng says.

In a mountainous place like Yunnan, and in many other parts of the developing world, such advantages can tip the balance between hunger and a decent living. And China is now ready to tip that scale in favor of genetically modified crops.

Surging costs, population growth, and drought and other setbacks linked to global climate change are pressuring world food supplies, while soaring prices on the street have triggered riots and raised the number of people going hungry

to more than 923 million, according to U.N. estimates.

With food demand forecast to increase by half by 2030, the incentive to use genetic engineering to boost harvests and protect precious crops from insects and other damage has never been greater.

In Europe, Africa and Asia, governments that have resisted imports of genetically modified foods and banned growing such crops are loosening those restrictions. Meanwhile, they are pushing ahead faster with their own research, despite lingering questions over the safety of such technology.

ASIAN BRIEFS

China AIDS activists say education fights stigma

BEIJING (AP)—AIDS activists were skeptical of a pledge by China's government to fight discrimination against people with the disease, saying Monday the move would mean little without improvements in education to increase awareness and alter mindsets. Health authorities and the U.N. AIDS agency pledged Sunday to combat the stigmatization of people with the disease by unveiling a massive red ribbon, the symbol of AIDS awareness, at the Olympic Bird's Nest stadium in Beijing. The Health Ministry said in a statement Monday that the government will strengthen efforts in education on AIDS prevention and to fight discrimination, while also stepping up condom distribution and outreach to high-risk groups such as prostitutes and homosexual men. It did not give specifics.

Sri Lanka: Military seizes key rebel-held town

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (AP)—Sri Lankan soldiers captured a key town on the main highway to the headquarters of the country's Tamil rebels, 18 years after the insurgents seized the area by overrunning an army camp, the military said Monday. Troops seized Kokavil town, some 12 miles (20 kilometers) south of the insurgents' de facto capital of Kilinochchi on Sun-

day, military spokesman Brig. Udaya Nanayakkara said. He did not give casualty details. The capture was the latest sign of the government's current dominance in the island's decades-old civil war. The rebels have been forced to abandoned vast areas of land while retreating to territory in the northeast during months of heavy battles. Tamil Tiger rebels have controlled Kokavil since they overran a military camp there in 1990, Nanayakkara said.

Rockets hit NATO trucks in Pakistan

PESHAWAR, Pakistan (AP)—Insurgents attacked a terminal used by trucks ferrying supplies to NATO and U.S. forces in Afghanistan on Monday, destroying three and wounding one person, police and a witness said. An AP Television News reporter saw two Humvee military vehicles on board the trucks on fire following the attack in the northwestern Pakistani city of Peshawar. The city, which sits along the supply route from Pakistan to Afghanistan, has seen an upsurge in violence in recent weeks, including the slaying of an American working on a U.S.-funded aid project. Police officer Kashif Alam said the attackers fired a rocket into the Fasial terminal, while a witness said he heard several gunshots. Alam said one person at the terminal was wounded, but had no more details.

World

Muslims condemn Mumbai attacks, worry about image

RAMALLAH, West Bank (AP)—Muslims from the Middle East to Britain and Austria condemned Sunday the Mumbai shooting rampage by suspected Islamic militants as senseless terrorism, but also found themselves on the defensive once again about bloodshed linked to their religion.

Intellectuals and community leaders called for greater efforts to combat religious fanaticism.

Indian police said Sunday that the only surviving gunman told them he belongs to the Pakistani militant group Lashkar-e-Taiba. The group is seen as a creation of Pakistani intelligence to help fight India in the disputed Kash-

mir region. Another group, Jaish-e-Mohammed, has also operated in Kashmir. Both are reported to be linked to al-Qaida.

Ten gunmen attacked 10 targets in the three-day assault including a Jewish community center and luxury hotels in India's commercial hub. More than 170 people were killed.

Many Muslims said they are worried such carnage is besmirching their religion.

"The occupation of the synagogue and killing people in hotels tarnishes the Muslim faith," said Kazim al-Muqdad, a political science lecturer at Baghdad University. "Anyone who slaughters people and screams

'Allahu Akbar' (God is Great) is sick and ignorant."

In Britain, home to nearly two million Muslims, a spokesman for the Muslim Council of Britain, Inayat Bunglawala, said that "a handful of terrorists like this bring the entire faith into disrepute."

A previously unknown Muslim group, Deccan Mujahideen,

claimed responsibility for the attacks. The name suggests origins in India.

Pakistan has denied involvement and demanding that India provide proof. In Pakistan, Jamaat-ud Dawa, an Islamist group believed to have ties to Lashkar-e-Taiba, denounced the killing of civilians.

Global AIDS crisis overblown? Some dare to say so

LONDON (AP)—As World AIDS Day is marked on Monday, some experts are growing more outspoken in complaining that AIDS is eating up funding at the expense of more pressing health needs.

They argue that the world has entered a post-AIDS era in which the disease's spread has largely been curbed in much of the world, Africa excepted.

"AIDS is a terrible humanitarian tragedy, but it's just one of many terrible humanitarian tragedies," said Jeremy Shiffman, who studies health spending at Syracuse University.

Roger England of Health Systems Workshop, a think tank based in the Caribbean island of Grenada, goes further. He argues that UNAIDS, the U.N. agency leading the fight against the disease, has outlived its purpose and should be disbanded.

"The global HIV industry is too big and out of control.

We have created a monster with too many vested interests and reputations at stake, ... too many relatively well paid HIV staff in affected countries, and too many rock stars with AIDS support as a fashion accessory," he wrote in the British Medical Journal in May.

Paul de Lay, a director at UNAIDS, disagrees. It's valid to question AIDS' place in the world's priorities, he says, but insists the turnaround is very recent and it would be wrong to think the epidemic is under control.

"We have an epidemic that has caused between 55 million and 60 million infections," de Lay said. "To suddenly pull the rug out from underneath that would be disastrous."

U.N. officials roughly estimate that about 33 million people worldwide have HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. Scientists say infec-

tions peaked in the late 1990s and are unlikely to spark big epidemics beyond Africa.

In developed countries, AIDS drugs have turned the once-fatal disease into a manageable illness.

England argues that closing UNAIDS would free up its \$200 million annual budget for other health problems such as pneumonia, which kills more children every year than AIDS, malaria and measles combined.

"By putting more money into AIDS, we are implicitly saying it's OK for more kids to die of pneumonia," England said.

His comments touch on the bigger complaint: that AIDS hogs money and may damage other health programs.

By 2006, AIDS funding accounted for 80 percent of all American aid for health and population issues, according to the Global Health Council.

In Ethiopia, Rwanda, Uganda and elsewhere, donations for HIV projects routinely outstrip the entire national health budgets.

In a 2006 report, Rwandan officials noted a "gross misallocation of resources" in health: \$47 million went to HIV, \$18 million went to malaria, the country's biggest killer, and \$1 million went to childhood illnesses.

"There needs to be a rational system for how to apportion scarce funds," said Helen Epstein, an AIDS expert who has consulted for UNICEF, the World Bank, and others.

In this Nov. 28, 2007 file photo, a social worker displays earrings and pendants made using the AIDS awareness symbol at a counseling center in Chennai, India.

AP

Calm returns to Nigerian city after deadly clashes

JOS, Nigeria (AP)—After two days of mob violence, an uneasy calm returned Sunday to this central Nigerian town. Women with plastic buckets ventured out in search of water and many of the dead were buried.

Troops on foot and in armored personnel carriers appeared Sunday to have quelled two days of ethnic and religious rioting that left more than 300 people dead in Jos, apparently ending the worst violence in the West African nation since 2004.

Streets stayed mostly empty, but hunger and thirst forced some residents out of their homes for the first time since the riots be-

gan Friday after a disputed election. Hundreds of women and girls, who wouldn't be considered combatants by soldiers with orders to shoot troublemakers on sight, carried buckets and cans to public water points.

"There's no water in the house. Our children are crying for water, and all the shops are closed. Even the last food we have, we can't cook because we have no water," said Hawa Ismailah, a Muslim housewife with 24 people cowering in her home.

She carried a yellow plastic bucket toward one of the water pipes in her neighborhood, leading a procession of younger girls

also bearing vessels for water.

Other people headed out of a town as supplies dwindled. Jennifer Emmanuel, a Christian secondary schoolgirl from southern Nigeria, rode in a bus under escort by a detachment of heavily armed police.

"As of now, we've eaten nothing," she said. "We're starving, so we have to leave the state."

Thousands of other Nigerians who fled their homes during the riots were sheltered in army barracks, police stations and other public buildings. Sani Ibrahim, a Nigerian Red Cross official, said 6,000 people were holed up in one secondary school.

being pushed back," he said.

On Monday, 10,000 delegates from 186 countries and environmental activists begin a two-week conference on forming an agreement to replace the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, which expires in 2012. The conference concludes with two days of talks among 150 government ministers, to be opened by U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

UN: Financial crisis delaying green projects

POZNAN, Poland (AP)—The global financial crisis already has delayed some green energy projects, stoking fears that a shortage of investment money will lead to cheap and dirty decisions on new power plants, the U.N.'s top climate official said.

But investors should see the crisis as "an opportunity for green growth" as they replace up to 40 percent of the world's power gen-

eration over the next decade, said Yvo de Boer, the executive secretary of the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change.

"The financial crisis will have an impact on climate change," he said Sunday. As investment money dries up, oil prices are dropping, which could discourage clean energy investments. "You already are seeing around the world a number of wind energy projects

WORLD BRIEFS

Canadian opposition agree on plan for new govt

TORONTO (AP)—Canada's opposition parties have agreed in principle to form a coalition that would topple Prime Minister Stephen Harper's Conservative government, an official said, though infighting among one of the parties cast doubt on whether such a bloc would hold. The opposition Liberals, New Democrats and Bloc Quebecois, the parties that would make up the new bloc, say that Harper has no solid plan to deal with the global economic crisis. Harper's party won enough votes in the Oct. 14 national election to stay in power, but its hold is tenuous because it did not win a majority of Parliament's 308 seats. The party must rely on opposition support to pass budgets and legislation. The Liberals and New Democrats have agreed to a coalition government structure that would give them a majority of seats, a New Democrat party official said Sunday. In the new government, the Liberals would have 19 Cabinet ministers and the New Democrats will have six, the official said.

Swiss approve pioneering legal heroin program

GENEVA (AP)—The world's most comprehensive legalized heroin program became permanent Sunday with overwhelming approval from Swiss voters who simultaneously rejected the decriminalization of marijuana. The heroin program, started in 1994, is offered in 23 centers across Switzerland. It has helped eliminate scenes of large groups

of drug users shooting up openly in parks that marred Swiss cities in the 1980s and 1990s and is credited with reducing crime and improving the health and daily lives of addicts. The nearly 1,300 selected addicts, who have been unhelped by other therapies, visit one of the centers twice a day to receive the carefully measured dose of heroin produced by a government-approved laboratory. They keep their paraphernalia in cups labeled with their names and use the equipment and clean needles to inject themselves—four at a time—under the supervision of a nurse, and also receive counseling from psychiatrists and social workers.

UN criticizes Darfur aid worker attacks

KHARTOUM, Sudan (AP)—The U.N. humanitarian chief on Sunday criticized attacks on aid workers in Darfur and called on both the Sudanese government and rebel groups to do their part to stop them. "It is unacceptable that we have double the attacks on aid workers than we had this time last year," John Holmes said in a statement at the end of a six-day visit to Sudan. Eleven aid workers have been killed in Darfur this year and 189 have been abducted, according to the United Nations. Holmes said the Sudanese government has a responsibility to protect humanitarian workers in the country's western region. But he said Darfur rebels appear to be responsible for most of the attacks. "I call on them to stop this kind of banditry and criminality once and for all," said Holmes.

Overdrive

2009 CC VR6 4MOTION

A coupe's looks, a rich feel, a VW with jazz

By **WARREN BROWN**
THE WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON—Some test cars remain parked, ignored as long as possible by me and members of my crew—my wife, Mary Anne, and my associate in vehicle evaluations for *The Washington Post*, Ria Manglapus.

The 2009 Volkswagen CC VR6 4Motion sedan sparked a turf war.

"Wow!" I exclaimed when I saw it.

"Ooh, what a nice-looking car," said Mary Anne.

"Awesome!" declared Ria. And the battle was on.

Luckily, Ria was preoccupied with another ride, the very decent Kia Optima sedan. I told her to enjoy herself and drove off in the CC VR6 4Motion—a name appropriate to nothing real, because a part of it stands

for "comfort coupe." VW's CC cars, built on a VW Passat platform, are four-door sedans. The "Comfort Coupe" moniker thus is a matter of marketing and appearance. In auto industry parlance, "coupe" sounds hotter than "sedan," a word often accompanied by "midsize" and "family," a combination that often translates to "boring" and "utilitarian" in the minds of many young, affluent consumers—the CC VR6 4Motion's target group.

It's not a complete stretch. Volkswagen's designers flirted with stylistic plagiarism and pulled off a neat trick here. Viewed from a distance, the CC looks like a coupe. The center pillar is invisible, giving the car's sleek "greenhouse"—the combination of its roof, front, side, and rear windows—a look of uninterrupted uniformity, much like a coupe.

Look again, and find the bor-

derline plagiarism. The CC's roof, for example, races upward and tapers nicely toward the rear, much in the manner of the 2009 Mercedes-Benz C-Class sedans, which also can be mistaken for coupes. The CC's rear-end treatment, a gently sculpted combination of sass and class, also has a Mercedes-Benz C-Class feel.

But VW's customers are not likely to object. The CC looks rich inside and out, an illusion cleverly maintained by eliminating one of the five seats normally

found in midsize family sedans. Two of VW's trademarked "V-Tex" leatherette bucket seats are up front and two are in the rear. The feeling is generous, luxuriously accommodating—considerably more upscale in demeanor than the layout of predecessor Passat sedans sold in the United States.

It is a thoroughly surprising car, not at all what we have come to expect from Volkswagen. It goes beyond the high-quality materials, the superb fit and fin-

ish normally found in VW and sibling Audi automobiles. The CC has a very discernible jazz to it, a really pleasant buzz.

You feel it when you crank the engine of the 280-horsepower CC VR6 4Motion. The exhaust note—the way the engine sounds burning fuel and expelling waste gases—is authoritative without being the least bit bullying.

I took off at night, because the best battles are those that never have to be fought. Mary

Anne does not like driving after dark, especially not along interstate highways. I love night driving, the later the better. Traffic mellows after hours. You can feel a car in that milieu. It's kind of intimate.

The CC VR6 4Motion felt good. Acceleration was smooth, instant. The car was a control freak's delight, wonderfully compliant and responsive. Audi and VW have designed one of the best all-wheel-drive systems in the business, one that responds instantly to changing road conditions. For the driver, it's confidence-inspiring technology.

I stayed out late piling on the miles, enjoying the solitude of a long drive in a fine car. When I returned home, I parked on the street, allowing Mary Anne unfettered access to her personal car—the Mini Cooper parked in the driveway. I showered and sneaked into bed.

I heard Mary Anne leaving the next morning and quietly congratulated myself for having the forethought to park the CC VR6 4Motion on the street, out of her way. I anticipated another day of fun driving that one.

But it wasn't to be. The Mini remained parked in the driveway. The Volkswagen's keys were missing. Mary Anne called me at noon: "Nice car," she said.



THE WASHINGTON POST

Volkswagen's 2009 CC VR6 4Motion sedan looks like a coupe. The center pillar is invisible, giving the car's sleek "greenhouse"—the combination of its roof, front, side, and rear windows—a look of uninterrupted uniformity, much like a coupe.

NUTS & BOLTS

By **WARREN BROWN**
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COMPLAINTS

Some people complained about the four-seat layout. They wanted five. Others said the CC line moves VW too far upscale and betrays the company's "just folks" persona.

RIDE, ACCELERATION AND HANDLING

Ride and handling are excellent, easily among best in class. Acceleration is good.

HEAD-TURNING QUOTIENT

Stunningly beautiful, but nonetheless controversial. Some people refuse to release VW from the Socialist School of Design, which emphasizes clean, sensible lines devoid of libido. By comparison the CC VR6 4Motion looks hot.

BODY STYLE/LAYOUT

The car has an entry-level luxury persona. But it and its CC siblings—including the four-cylinder, front-wheel drive Sport model—are front-engine, midsize, mainstream family sedans. The 4Motion, as the name implies, comes with all-wheel drive.

ENGINE/TRANSMISSION

Inline four-cylinder engines and slant V-6 models are available in the CC line. The 3.6-liter, 24-valve V-6 engine in the test car develops 280 horsepower at 6,200 revolutions per

minute and 265 foot-pounds of torque at 2,750 revolutions per minute. The engine is mated to a six-speed transmission that can be shifted automatically or manually.

CAPACITIES

There are seats for four people. Cargo capacity is 13 cubic feet. The fuel tank holds 18.5 gallons of "recommended" premium unleaded gasoline.

MILEAGE

A tad disappointing. I got 23 miles per gallon—two miles below the federally rated mileage of 25 mpg—in high-way cruising.

SAFETY

Standard equipment includes four-wheel disc brakes (ventilated front/solid rear) with antilock protection; emergency braking assistance; electronic stability and traction control; front side and head air bags.

PRICE

Base price is \$39,300. Dealer's invoice price on base model is \$36,811. Price as tested is \$42,980, including \$2,990 in options (20-gig onboard navigation system with infotainment media interface, rear side air bags) and a \$690 destination charge. Dealer's price as tested is \$40,142. Prices are sourced from Volkswagen, Edmunds.com and Cars.com, an affiliate of The Washington Post.

PURSE-STRINGS NOTE

Nice, but pricey in comparison with rivals.

To know Ford's F-150 is to love it

By **DAN NEIL**
(C) 2008, LOS ANGELES TIMES

My Car of the Year is a truck.

I don't own a gun rack, and I'd like to shoot Toby Keith out of the nearest cannon, so a pickup truck has to go a long way to blow my mind.

What the 2009 Ford F-150 pickup does is simply to exceed expectations by a few degrees in every category.

It rides a little more smoothly. It's a little quieter. It's more agile in day-to-day driving and more of a draft horse when you need it to haul or tow. It's better-equipped. When you add all those margins up, the Ford is vastly better than anything else in its class.

Take, for example, its bronze-bell solidity. Ford isn't the only truck manufacturer to use hydro-formed, fully boxed high-strength frame rails in the chassis. But it might be the only one that laser-welds the roof seams and body-side panels to the truck's superstructure.

Compared with robotic spot-welding, seam-welding essentially turns the various welded parts into a single piece of steel. The resulting sense of foundry

casting isn't something you can exactly measure, or even describe. You slam the door and nothing trembles or rattles. You mat the throttle on the open highway and what you hear in the cabin is a deep, pleasant timbre. Between the fancy engine mounts, the clever tuning of bushings and chassis mounts, and acres of sound deadening, the F-150 has the noise-vibration harshness of a luxury car.

The pickup proprieties have been observed. Three cab styles, four box styles and seven trim levels are available, including the new Platinum series (electronics galore, 20-inch chrome wheels, brushed alloy trims in the cabin, power-deployable running boards, heated/cooled seats, and loads of mirror-polished metal.) The F-150 XL regular cab starts at \$21,320, whereas a loaded Platinum series SuperCrew 4x4 will approach \$50,000.

Three V8 engines are offered: a 5.4-liter three-valve (320 horsepower); a 4.6-liter three-valve (292 horsepower); and a 4.6-liter two-valve (248 horsepower). Mileage is up across the line. The 5.4-liter, backed by a six-speed automatic, returns 14 miles per gallon city and 20

mpg highway, largely thanks to the new six-speed automatic (the 2008 F-150 got 14/17 mpg). Ford also is offering something called the Superior Fuel Economy package that, with the help of a friendlier rear-axle ratio and low-rolling-resistance tires, gets 15/21 mpg.

Three quick hits:

■ The SuperCrew (four-door) configuration is 6 inches longer in wheelbase and overall length, and that extra room is used to enlarge the rear doors and rear cabin. With the rear seat flipped up, the truck has 57.6 cubic feet of enclosed cargo space—more than a lot of mid-size sport utility vehicles or wagons. The rear seating is the size of a squash court.

■ Ford rules the cargo box: Among the many fun features are a deployable side-step (to help reach inside the truck); a fold-out tailgate step with assist handle; and a set of slide-out tool trays or drawers built into the lower quarter panel.

Also, Ford is offering a package called Work Solutions. Designed for the truck-based entrepreneur, the system offers high-speed Internet access, navigation, fleet tracking and

PC programs such as Microsoft Excel and Word, all built into the dash-mounted LCD display. With wireless keyboard and printer, you can type out and print invoices right there in the client's driveway.

The system also includes Tool Link: You can put radio-frequency identity tags on your tools, and the truck will electronically inventory them every time you start the engine and alert you if a tool is missing. Also handy is a heavy-duty, self-spooling cable lock that keeps tools secure.

■ Trailering: The F-150 is rated for 11,300 pounds of towing, which is 600 pounds more than a comparable Chevy 1500. Stability control is standard, as is trailer-sway control (the system will null out uncontrolled oscillations in the trailer using selective braking).

Integrated trailer-brake control also is offered, replacing those clunky plug-in modules that you install under the dash. In my half-day test drive, towing a 5,000-pound box of something, the trailer-braking action was far smoother and more integrated than that provided by the usual auxiliary modules. Another option: a reverse camera. Don't back up in the Whole Foods parking lot without it.

Life & Style

Losing a passport, or overstaying your welcome

By ALANA SEMUELS
(C) 2008, LOS ANGELES TIMES

SHANGHAI, China—It's never a good feeling to lose your passport and all your credit cards in the biggest city in the most populous country of the world. It's an even worse feeling when you realize that your country isn't going to lift a finger to help you.

Getting back to the U.S. from China, where I was traveling with friends in September, was a weeklong saga of closed government offices, stubborn officials and airline personnel and a constant refrain of "I'm sorry, there's nothing I can do." It wiped away my perception that as long as I didn't do anything illegal, the U.S. government would clean up any problems.

I was heading back from a grueling hike in Anhui province when I left my passport and credit cards in a taxicab in Shanghai, two days before I was scheduled to return home. I stumbled through the streets, trying to avoid the Shanghai drivers who probably wouldn't yield to a pedestrian even if Chairman Mao were to rise from his grave. I entered an Internet café, where I used Skype to call the U.S. Consulate (the embassy in Beijing had closed). The woman on duty told me that the Consulate was closed for the weekend plus a weeklong Chinese holiday, so I wouldn't be able to get a new passport for 10 days. I wasn't sure, but she sounded slightly gleeful.

Hundreds of years ago, Marco Polo traveled across modern-day Uzbekistan and Mongolia and ended up in the court of Kublai Khan in China without a passport, or even a visa. "He is heartily welcome," the khan is reported to have said. Later, the khan made Polo governor of Yangzhou, a city near modern day Shanghai.

Today, it's not so easy to enter China. For my trip there as a tourist, I had to apply for a visa, providing the Chinese with my itinerary, proof that I had a plane ticket to leave the country and copies of hotel reservations. When I lost the passport, I lost that hard-earned visa too.

The U.S. Consulate requires citizens in the area who need a new passport to go to the Exit-Entry bureau in Shanghai's Pudong district to get an official police report saying they lost their passport. I approached the man at the lost passport booth—unluckily numbered 13—and told him I needed the police report fast.

"For emergencies, ask him," Passport Man said, pointing to a man sitting at a booth, where a long line waited.

An hour later, I explained my emergency to the supervisor: that I needed a police report so I could get a passport so I could get a visa before the Chinese government closed for a week. Unless I got a visa in the next two days, I would be stuck in China for a week and a half. He listened calmly, and then told



Losing one's passport in Shanghai is bad but it's even worse when you realize that your own government won't help you.

me to come back the next day for the police report. If the U.S. Consulate could get me a passport the next day, the Chinese would rush me a visa, allowing me to leave just a day late.

The U.S. Consulate wasn't as flexible. They told me that once I provided them the police report, they could get me a passport the next day—if I was willing to cough up \$1,500. Short of that, they said, there was nothing they could do.

"See, this is why our countries

are different," Passport Man said later. "We serve our people always. Your country just makes them pay money. We would never charge our people."

In the 19th century, crews of ships desperate for skilled sailors often kidnapped men, drugged them and sailed off into the horizon. Because many of the ships were bound for Shanghai, the action came to be known as getting shanghaied. It later began to mean being held

against one's will. I felt shanghaied in Shanghai.

Passports are a fairly modern invention as we know them today, visas even more so. Passports were issued after World War I, when the International Organization for Refugees gave Russians fleeing their country's revolution formal documents, called Nansen passports, to ensure them safe passage. As countries became more nationalistic after World War I, they required passports of people trying to enter their country, said John Torpey, a professor at the Graduate Center, City University of New York.

Not everybody liked the idea that you couldn't go from one country to another without lots of red tape. Advocates protested the restrictions on freedom of movement, said Jonathon W. Moses, a professor at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology in Trondheim. A German author even wrote a novel, "The Death Ship," about sailors lacking passports or any documentation who are deported from one country to another, unwanted by officials everywhere.

In Shanghai, I felt like I was on a death ship of my own, held hostage by my own country.

I was shocked when, four days after I finally got my passport, I got a call from a man named Dr. Lu. He was a friend of my mother's boss, and he knew someone high up in the Communist Party. His friend had arranged for the Chinese

government to open for me and get me the visa early, he said.

I was incredulous. Why would the Chinese government open during one of the biggest holidays of the year to get me a visa, when my own government wouldn't budge? But I didn't ask questions. I just showed up at the government building, waited to get my visa, and power-walked away before they could change their minds.

Throughout the whole endeavor, I was kicking myself for losing my passport, but there wasn't much I could have done. Travel insurance wouldn't have been able to help with the closed offices, and copies of my passport didn't help either.

My only take-away: Money belts worn around your waist are easy to lose. I had taken mine off to remove a piece of paper and left it in a cab. If I had to do it all over again, I probably would buy one that went around my neck, rather than my waist.

Yet, it's strange: We have borders plus passports that show our allegiances to our homelands, but citizenship doesn't get you as far as you would think. We don't get stuck on death ships anymore or shanghaied onto merchant ships—instead, we're beholden to paper documents and bureaucracy so vast that it probably would have persuaded Polo to just stay home.

One thing hasn't changed, though—it's still possible to get stuck in China, dependent on the whims of a government official to get you in or out.

Other Obamas revel in rare moniker

By STEVE HENDRIX
THE WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON—Nicanor Obama began to realize he might be on to a good thing when he didn't get a speeding ticket not long ago. After stopping the 28-year-old for a little downtown Washington lead-footing, a District of Columbia police officer looked at his driver's license and put the citation book away.

"He said, 'Well, I'm going to let you go because you have the Obama name' " is how the Arlington, Va., resident recalled the encounter.

Since Election Day, his moniker has sparked goodwill, from nightclub freebies to hearty handshakes from fellow students at the University of the District of Columbia, where he studies political science. "I'm not related to the president, but I think Obama is a good name to have right now."

Their lives might not have changed as dramatically as a

certain Chicago-based Obama family, but non-Barack Obamas have been basking in a little low-watt glory of their own. Suddenly, having the most famous last name in the world means cashing a check, flashing an ID or making a dinner reservation might never be the same.

"I signed up for a Harris Teeter card the other day, and the woman was, like, Obama?," said Denise Maye Obama, 19, of Alexandria, Va. "She said: 'That's a first. Are you related to the president?' Everyone asks if I'm related to the president now. One of these times I'm going to say yes, just for the fun of it."

Having a famous last name of any kind sparks a lifetime of predictable checkout-line chit-chat; just ask anyone named Sinatra or Kissinger (or, in this reporter's experience, anyone sharing a name with a certain electric-guitar master). But being asked whether you can sing "My Way" or play "Purple Haze" pales in comparison

with "Can you get my cousin pardoned?" or, more earnestly, "Can you get me inauguration tickets?"

Denise, a freshman at the University of Virginia, said she is asked daily whether she can leverage her name for good seats at the parade or a White House visit. But the only time she has seen the other Obama, at a campaign rally in Charlottesville, she had terrible seats. "My name didn't do me much good that time," she said. "I didn't even get to shake his hand."

At the very least, according to Francisca Obama, a graduate student in Human Resources at Strayer University, no one forgets or botches her name any more.

"Sometimes African names are kind of hard," said Francisca, 29. "Now I don't even have to spell my name.

Everybody knows it already."

If it's good to be an Obama, it's also exceedingly rare. Ac-



University of Virginia freshman Denise Maye Obama, 19, of Alexandria, Va., says she is asked daily whether she can leverage her name for good seats at the Jan. 20 inaugural parade or a White House visit. No, she's not related to President-elect Barack Obama.

THE WASHINGTON POST

cording to databases, there might be fewer than 20 Obama families in the United States, compared with more than 11,000 Clintons and 60,000 Bushes. (Whitepages.com shows more than 70 Obama listings, but many of those are clunky fakes, including the entry for Hillary C. Obama of Cleveland.)

Nicanor Obama said he has been riding a small social wave that started election night, when he was waved under the rope line at a Washington nightclub with no cover charge. He was the toast of the delirious crowds that night, he said.

And last week, when Nicanor and his family went to visit a cousin and her new baby at Virginia Hospital Center, they created a minor buzz in the lobby when they asked for Josephina Obama's room.

"They said, 'Obama? Is she one of the Obamas? Are they here?'" Nicanor said. "They treated us like VIPs."

Nicanor is a native of Equatorial Guinea. The name is common there—much more so than in Kenya, in fact, where the president-elect's father was from—and Guineans wonder whether they can make their own claim to a branch of the president-elect's family tree. There are also a few Obamas of Japanese decent.

"Every day, I'm having so much fun with this," said Susie Obama, a real estate investor in Palm Coast, Fla. "When I stop at the bank, they say, 'Roll out the red carpet.' I get e-mails from Japan saying, 'Hello to the first lady.'"

It's all a big improvement over her most recent name association, she said.

"I'm so glad Obama is finally a good guy. I really had a hard time for a while there with Osama."

Staff researcher Meg Smith contributed to this report.

His anti-consumer challenge: Live with only 100 things

By JULIA FELDMEIER
SPECIAL TO THE WASHINGTON POST

Stuff. We have a lot of it. They're nice, these belongings. Entertaining and helpful and cool. And yet: They're also a little oppressive, the way they clutter our homes and dictate our actions.

Lo, the 100 Thing Challenge: an endeavor by Dave Bruno, a San Diego resident who decided to whittle his way down to 100 personal possessions. Gone was the iPod. The baseball jersey signed by Pete Rose. The dress pants and the sport coat and the nose-hair trimmer. Purged, all of them. Bruno, a 37-year-old Web editor, officially began his challenge Nov. 12 and plans to continue it for one year (track his adventure and see a list of everything he kept and ditched at www.guynameddave.com).

Q. When you decided to start this challenge and began weeding through your things, were you horrified by how much you had?

A. Some things I thought, "Oh, I don't have as many shirts as I thought I had"—but then, wow, how do I have all these extra pairs of shoes?

Q. Is there a feeling of wastefulness that accompanies discarding all these items?

A. I put a lot of stuff on Craigslist and gave a lot away, but some stuff wasn't going to make it out the door unless it got thrown



The 100 Thing Challenge is an endeavor by Dave Bruno, a Web editor from San Diego who decided to whittle his way down to 100 personal possessions. In his purge, Bruno, 37, made an exception for his books. He's keeping "one library."

away. There's not much you can do with an old battered shirt.

Q. You didn't just put items in storage. You actually got rid of them. Is your plan to repurchase these things once the year is up?

A. I don't know. For the year, I don't have these things to go back to. My anticipation is that I won't

even want to. ... It's not a bad practice to give up stuff for a while, to come back with a fresh perspective and new appreciation.

Q. Your challenge makes exceptions for things like socks and undergarments—each category counts as one thing.

A. Yes. The idea is to focus on consumerism things. The big

exception is books. I'm keeping one library of books.

Q. We're a country that extols consumerism. Our government sends us stimulus checks in hopes that we'll go out and spend. Is the 100 Thing Challenge un-American?

A. Some people give me a hard time, saying that if every-

body did the 100 Thing Challenge, then our economy would collapse. But I think that whenever we use our money and resources well, it always benefits the economy.

Q. The holidays are around the corner. How are your family and friends supposed to accommodate you regarding gifts?

A. I just had a birthday on Nov. 12. Everybody was really gracious. I got a chocolate bar. And I love vanilla, so one of my daughters got me these genuine vanilla beans. My mom and my wife's mother gave us some money to go out on dates. So far, everybody gave a ton of thought toward figuring out what's something that's not a "thing" that'll give me pleasure.

Q. You're a devout Christian. Do you find that materialism clouds people's faith?

A. Yes. The Bible talks a lot about materialism. In one of his sermons, Jesus says no person can serve both God and money; you cannot serve two masters.

Q. You have a Facebook group dedicated to the 100 Thing Challenge with nearly 700 members. In this age of on-line social networking, we seem to collect friends. Do you think we should consider decluttering our lives of these "friends," too, and strip down to those who are most meaningful?

A. People could certainly spend too much time on those relationships and less time in the real world. Sometimes it just feels ridiculous and overwhelming, and yet, at the same time, it's given me really neat opportunities to connect with people. A woman from Scotland who found out about the 100 Thing Challenge sent me a birthday card. It's not a super meaningful relationship, but it's cool.

loafers go fashion forward

BY MELISSA MAGSAYSAY
LOS ANGELES TIMES

Looking at Christian Louboutin's 4-inch high-heeled loafer in stores now, one wouldn't guess that the classic style was inspired by Norwegian dairy farmers. Loafers have come a long way since they first surfaced seven decades ago, and this season designers are reinterpreting the classic in tons of ways.

The style dates to 1932, when the owner of a New Hampshire leather company saw an Esquire magazine photo of farmers wearing slip-on shoes in the cattle "loafing" area (where cows wait to be milked) at a Norwegian dairy. In 1936, John Bass created the version most of us grew up with. The "Weejun" (short for Norwegian) loafer is more widely known as the penny loafer because the hole across the vamp proved to be an easy spot to store a shiny coin. Dimes—emergency pay—phone change—replaced pennies in the '50s and '60s. The shoes have endured as a preppy essential, adding a polished look to such outfits as power suits and prep—school uniforms — although there was a slight detour in the '80s, when men wore loafers with lightweight suits and no socks (think Don Johnson in a dove gray suit and bare ankles). And who can forget a one-gloved Michael Jackson wearing penny loafers with skinny flood—water slacks?



Top photo: Bass loafer, \$29.99; Cole Haan loafer, \$275.

This season, the loafer has caught the zeitgeist, and there are inventive takes on the classic in a wide array of prices. From the runway at Dolce & Gabbana to those spiky Louboutins, they're the style of the moment. Good timing for Cole Haan, which released a collection of hand-sewn penny loafers carrying a 1928 penny (\$275) to commemorate the brand's 80th anniversary this year.

Several designers have injected a pop of color. Marc by Marc Jacobs has a hot—pink patent—leather loafer (\$260), Tory Burch makes a bright orange version (\$295) and Cole Haan mixes traditional and trendy by doing its classic penny loafer in a shiny teal. Tod's adds a twist with exotic skins such as ostrich (\$1,495), and Dolce & Gabbana is lining a high-heel patent—leather loafer with its signature leopard print (\$750).

Although the loafer generally is a flat shoe, it translates as a pump or high heel for a more dressed-up look. Nine West has the Alimona (\$79), a gunmetal gray pump with a penny—loafer detail. Calvin Klein makes a version with a slightly lower heel (\$98), and Max Studio adds a '40s flair to a mahogany—heeled loafer with a platform sole, stack heel and peep toe (\$180). Such updates aren't exactly what those Norwegian farmers had in mind, but they're a stylish translation of a classic that's trendy now—and will always work as a wardrobe essential.

Attack the holidays with civility

By VALERIE FINHOLM
THE HARTFORD COURANT

Was your idiot brother-in-law off on another political rant at Thanksgiving?

Did "sweet" grandmother comment on your weight as she handed you a piece of pumpkin pie?

And, finally, did someone steal your parking space at the mall?

It seems everyone might need some mannerly advice. So we talked to P.M. Forni, author of "The Civility Solution: What to Do When People Are Rude." The Johns Hopkins University professor of Italian literature is also the author of "Choosing Civility" and founder of the Civility Initiative.

Question: The holidays seem to be rife with rudeness. How come?

Answer: Because we are stressed. We have expectations of the season that very often don't pan out. This year at family unions there may be the added stress agent of economy and the elections.

Q: How do you respond to rude people, especially if they're family members?

A: The key is to prepare for a situation. Prepare your response. If your uncle says, "Here we have our resident liberal whose candidate won the election,"

your response might be: "I wonder how you determined how I voted. I don't remember disclosing that with you." Be assertive—otherwise they will repeat that behavior—but not aggressive. Handle it with as much detachment as possible.

Q: Do rude people know they're rude?

A: About 75 percent to 85 percent of Americans think that Americans are rude. But when you ask one American, "Do you think you're rude?" in 99 cases they will say, "No I'm not rude." Very rarely do we see ourselves as part of the problem.

Q: You write that when rudeness can't be prevented, civility is your best choice. That's hard, especially if someone just given you a vulgar gesture. How do you keep from responding in kind?

A: Whenever you are at the wheel, expect the infamous finger may appear at some point. Picture the scene in your mind: There you are, calm and collected, even after the slight. Anticipating and visualizing make you feel in control and prepare you to deal at your best with the real thing.

Q: I was in a store recently where there was a sale on jewelry. A customer was hovering over the sale box at the coun-

ter, and when I tried to look into it, she swatted me away with her hand. I was stunned. What could I have said?

A: "Ma'am, if I inadvertently got too close, you could have told me instead of pushing me back." That is being assertive, not aggressive.

Q: And what should I say to the guy that steals my parking space?

A: "I had been waiting for that spot with my turn signal on for quite some time. I would appreciate it if you let me have it." If the driver responds dismissively or aggressively, just say, "I am sorry you are not choosing to do the right thing. I just hope you think about it so the next time you will," and walk away.

Q: Are parents culpable for failing to teach children manners?

A: As a society, we have been very successful over the last two generations in instilling self-esteem in our children. We have not been as successful in instilling self-restraint.

Q: It's so hard not to respond to rude people rudely.

A: If you believe in civility, you don't respond to rudeness with rudeness. Accept that it has happened just like you accept that it's Monday, and it's raining. It's part of life.

'Mad' curves, vintage soul

By MONICA CORCORAN
(C) 2008, LOS ANGELES TIMES

LOS ANGELES—Christina Hendricks eyes a darling white cloche much as a cougar sizes up a coyote with a limp. She circles. She purrs. She pounces. "I have so many hats, but ... " she says, adjusting the brim in the mirror at the local vintage boutique The Way We Wore. Leave it to Hendricks to flirt with a hat. The 33-year-old redhead—best known as the ridiculously sexy and shrewd secretary Joan Holloway on "Mad Men"—has quickly become a style sensation in her own right. Guys gulp at her pinup-girl figure. Women, thrilled to see a female on TV with curves, are encouraged to experiment with pencil skirts and snug sweaters.

Hendricks has forever adored vintage and thrift-store finds. Lit-

tle black dresses are her biggest weakness. After an afternoon of playing dress-up, Hendricks, 33, dished on everything from her early years as a fashion designer to her aggressive underwear.

Question: We're so used to seeing you as a 1960s vixen. Describe your off-screen personal style.

Answer: Eclectic, romantic and a little rock 'n' roll. I have gotten lazier over the years. Now, I just like to put on a dress. Separates are too difficult. I choose dresses that seem a little edgy or accessorize with jewelry. I will make it rock 'n' roll by adding a glove or a hat.

Q: Who are your style icons?

A: Janis Joplin. I don't dress like her, but I am inspired by her. Marilyn Monroe was never

vulgar, and she always looked sensual. I love Faye Dunaway and the Annie Hall look, too. One day, I will wear tight black pants and a leather jacket. Another day, I might wear a soft dress. What I love about clothes is that you get to play different parts.

Q: As a kid, were you chic or a freak?

A: In my junior high yearbook, there's a picture that says: "Christina Hendricks in one of her own fashions." I started designing clothes in fifth grade. My mom is a really good seamstress, so she helped me execute my designs.

Q: You can't stop there. Describe one of your creations.

A: It is tragic. I had a pair of tailored pants with geometric designs on them that were



Nobody rocks autumn's retro look like "Mad Men's" Christina Hendricks. Illustrates FASHION-HENDRICKS (category I) by Monica Corcoran (c) 2008, Los Angeles Times. Moved Wednesday, Nov. 5, 2008.

LOS ANGELES TIMES

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Transporter 3

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Sunday	1:25	4:30	7:15	
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Jason Statham, Robert Berleand
Action, Crime, Sequel • Rated PG 13

Synopsis

Frank Martin has been pressured into transporting Valentina, the kidnapped daughter of Leonid Vasilev, the head of the Environmental Protection Agency for the Ukraine, from Marseilles through Stuttgart and Budapest until he ends up in Odessa on the Black Sea. Along the way, with the help of Inspector Tarconi, Frank has to contend with the people who strong armed him to take the job, agents sent by Vasilev to intercept him, and the general non-cooperation of his passenger.



Four Christmases

Friday	1:15	4:05	7:10	9:45
Saturday	1:15	4:05	7:10	9:45
Sunday	1:15	4:05	7:10	
Mon thru Thurs	4:05	7:10		

Nince Vaughn, Reese Witherspoon
Comedy, Family, Holiday • Rated PG 13

Synopsis

No one enjoys the holidays more than Brad and Kate. Every December 25th, this happily unmarried, upscale San Francisco couple embark on a holiday tradition they have shared every year since they met—ditching their crazy families for a relaxing, fun-filled vacation in some sunny exotic locale. There, sipping margaritas by the pool, they toast the season, knowing they have once again avoided the chaos and emotional fallout of their four respective households: divorced parents, squabbling siblings, out-of-control kids and all the simmering resentments and awkward moments that are the hallmarks of every family Christmas.



Australia

Friday	1:00	4:00	7:00	10:00
Saturday	1:00	4:00	7:00	10:00
Sunday	1:00	4:00	7:00	
Mon thru Thurs	4:00	7:00		

Nicole Kidman, Hugh Jackman
War, Romance • Rated PG 13

Synopsis

In Australia, on the brink of World War II, an English aristocrat travels to the faraway continent, where she meets a rough-hewn local and reluctantly agrees to join forces with him to save the land she inherited. Together, they embark upon a transforming journey across hundreds of miles of the world's most beautiful yet unforgiving terrain, only to still face the bombing of the city of Darwin by the Japanese forces that attacked Pearl Harbor.



Twilight

Friday	1:30	4:25	7:20	9:50
Saturday	1:30	4:25	7:20	9:50
Sunday	1:30	4:25	7:20	
Mon thru Thurs	4:25	7:20		

Kristen Stewart, Robert Pattinson
Drama, Thriller • Rated PG 13



Bolt

Friday	1:10	4:15	7:30	9:30
Saturday	1:10	4:15	7:30	9:30
Sunday	1:10	4:15	7:30	
Mon thru Thurs	4:15	7:30		

John Travolta, Miley Cyrus
Action, Animated • Rated PG



Quantum of Solace

Friday	1:05	4:20	7:05	9:35
Saturday	1:05	4:20	7:05	9:35
Sunday	1:05	4:20	7:05	
Mon thru Thurs	4:20	7:05		

Daniel Craig, Judi Dench
Action, Adventure • Rated PG 13



Madagascar Escape 2 Africa

Friday	1:20	4:10	7:25	9:40
Saturday	1:20	4:10	7:25	9:40
Sunday	1:20	4:10	7:25	
Mon thru Thurs	4:10	7:25		

Ben Stiller, Chris Rock
Comedy, Animated • Rated PG

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puffy at the bottom and then elastic at the waist. Sort of like harem pants. I had extra fabric and went and made a matching headband. People didn't know if I was cool or to be feared. No one was trying to copy me.

Q: When did you get hooked on vintage shopping?

A: I have always shopped in thrift stores and vintage shops. Most recently, I have been mixing a lot of old accessories like jewelry and scarves into my wardrobe. I just bought some pieces of beautiful vintage Italian lace that I will wear with my jean jacket.

Q: When you shop for vintage, what do you mostly buy?

A: I can't wear the shoes because they are so narrow. I love finding beautiful old kimonos. I just realized that if you have a great evening dress, you need the right handbag too. I am building an arsenal of them so I won't have to panic when I am getting ready for an event.

Q: Have you learned any tricks of the trade for wearing vintage?

A: If you see something on the rack and it doesn't fit, don't despair. You can always have it tailored. I am constantly looking for a great tailor. My motto is: If you find something that fits you perfectly, buy it.

Q: After playing Joan, are

you sick and tired of pencil skirts?

A: No! I never knew the wonders of them until "Mad Men." I learned a lot from my character and Janie Bryant, our costume designer. I learned that you can see a vintage pencil skirt on a rack, and it looks like a frumpy old thing. But you put it on, and all of a sudden, it's like "sexretary."

Q: Speaking of "sexretary," are you surprised that your curves have caused so much ballyhoo?

A: People have been really positive about my body type and what it means to women on TV and in fashion. They have been appreciative, rather than critical. And I know my boyfriend has always appreciated it. Remember that "Ally McBeal" thing when those actresses just got skinnier and skinnier? I was afraid that they were going to disappear.

Q: As Joan, you manage to be all woman and one of the guys in the office. What's the trick?

A: Joan gets along with the guys so well because she doesn't let them victimize her or run to the bathroom and cry. The men in the office love her because they don't have to walk on eggshells. They can tease her because she can give it back.

Q: Has anyone in this cruel town ever made you cry?

A: I have been here 11 years, and two casting directors have made me cry. I went in for a project during pilot season a few years ago and wore gray trousers and a silk Donna Karan blouse. My manager called me later and asked, "What did you wear?" Because I was busty, the casting director said I was dressed like a slut. That was so mean. I thought, "If you can't keep your eyes off my breasts, that's your problem, lady."

Q: You're a natural blond. When did you first go red?

A: I was 10 years old and I wanted to be Anne of Green Gables. My mom is very fun, and we used one of those cover-the-gray rinses. When I went to school the next day, the teacher said, "What did your mother do to you?" I was thrilled. I have been red ever since.

Q: Can we please talk about those "Mad Men" undergarments?

A: My girdle has boning, and I wear those bullet bras, as you know. It's a lot underneath, and it's all authentic. I have two scars from the rubber where I attach my garters. I would complain more, but it makes me look good.

Q: You must want to walk around naked on the weekends.

A: As a matter of fact, I do just that.

'Four Christmases' finds \$31.7M in holiday cheer

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Thanksgiving weekend movie crowds gobbled up the Reese Witherspoon and Vince Vaughn holiday comedy "Four Christmases," which debuted at No. 1 with \$31.7 million, according to studio estimates Sunday.

The Warner Bros. release, featuring Witherspoon and Vaughn as a couple suffering through four separate family holiday gatherings, raised its total to \$46.7 million since opening Wednesday to get a head start on the long weekend.

In terms of revenue, it was Hollywood's second-biggest Thanksgiving period ever. The top 12 movies took in \$223.7 million from Wednesday to Sunday, trailing only the \$232.2 million haul over Thanksgiving in 2000.

Summit Entertainment's vampire romance "Twilight," which had a huge No. 1 opening the previous weekend, took a steep 62 percent decline from its \$69.6 million debut and was

1. "Four Christmases," \$31.7 million.
2. "Bolt," \$26.6 million.
3. "Twilight," \$26.4 million.
4. "Quantum of Solace," \$19.5 million.
5. "Australia," \$14.8 million.
6. "Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa," \$14.5 million.
7. "Transporter 3," \$12.3 million.
8. "Role Models," \$5.3 million.
9. "The Boy in the Striped Pajamas," \$1.7 million.
10. "Milk," \$1.4 million.

neck-and-neck for second place with Disney's animated family flick "Bolt."

Based on Sunday's estimates, "Bolt" had a slight lead with \$26.6 million for the weekend, compared to \$26.4 million for "Twilight." Their rankings could change once final numbers are released Monday.

"Twilight" is still a phenomenon, but you can't really maintain that level of intensity week after week," said Paul Dergarabedian, president of box-office tracker Media By Numbers.

"Twilight" raised its 10-day total to \$119.7 million, while "Bolt" lifted its sum to \$66.9 million.

Hollywood typically releases a handful of holiday-themed movies starting in November, but "Four Christmases" has the market virtually to itself this season.

"It was the perfect time. It's the only movie out there that deals with Christmas," said Dan Fellman, head of distribution for Warner Bros.

The only potential competition comes Dec. 12 with the John Leguizamo tale "Nothing Like the Holidays."

The weekend's other new wide release, the Nicole Kidman-Hugh Jackman epic "Australia," opened at No. 5 with \$14.8 million for the weekend and \$20 million since debuting Wednesday.

The 20th Century Fox film reunites Kidman with "Moulin Rouge" director Baz Luhrmann

for a World War II-era romance between an aristocratic British woman and an Australian ranch hand.



Witherspoon

Sean Penn's drama "Milk" got off to a great start in limited release, coming in at No. 10 with \$1.4 million in just 36 theaters. The film had a strong average of \$38,375 a cinema, compared with \$9,571 in 3,310 theaters for "Four Christmases."

"Milk," an Academy Awards contender released by Focus Features, stars Penn as gay-rights pioneer Harvey Milk, the San Francisco city supervisor slain by a colleague who also killed the mayor. The film expands to more theaters Friday.

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to Media By Numbers LLC. Final figures will be released Monday.

Sydney Opera House darkens in mourning

SYDNEY, Australia (AP)—The distinctive white sails of the Sydney Opera House darkened Sunday night to mourn the death of Joern Utzon, the creative mind behind the globally known landmark.

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd led praise for the Danish architect, whose most distinctive creation had a troublesome birth in Australia but is now held dear as perhaps the country's most recognized icon.

"Joern Utzon was a visionary architect whose legacy includes one of the world's most spectacular and inspiring buildings, the Sydney Opera House," Rudd said in a statement.

From the prime minister's residence overlooking the opera house, Rudd later told reporters, "In the great sweep of history, what we're left with is a beautiful building, Sydney's symbol to the world, Australia's symbol to the world."

He called Utzon—who never saw his masterpiece completed—"a son of Denmark but ... in terms of his spirit, a son of Australia as well."

Floodlights that illuminate the shell-like structure were dimmed for one hour Sunday night to mark Utzon's death. Flags on the city's other landmark, the arch-like Sydney Harbor Bridge, would be lowered to half-staff on Monday to honor Utzon, the New South Wales state government announced.

"Joern Utzon was an architectural and creative genius who gave Australia and the world a great gift," said Kim Williams, the chairman of the trust that operates the venue. "Sydney Opera House is core to our national cultural identity and a source of great pride to all Australians. It has become the most globally recognized symbol of our country."



The Sydney Opera House lights are dimmed on its sails as a mark of respect to mark the death of Joern Utzon, the creative mind behind the globally known landmark, Sunday, Nov. 30, 2008.

A-Rod in Mexico City on same weekend as Madonna

MEXICO CITY (AP)—New York Yankees third-baseman Alex Rodriguez appeared in Mexico City on the same weekend as Madonna—a turn of events he called "very good."

The 33-year-old baseball star spent two hours Sunday teaching kids to bat at a new sports center built on a landfill in the poor suburb of Nezahualcoyotl.

Pop star Madonna meanwhile prepared to perform for a sold-out second night in the capital as part of her "Sticky & Sweet" tour.

When asked what he thought

about being in the sprawling capital at the same time as Madonna, Rodriguez said it was "very good," without elaborating.

Rodriguez and his wife divorced in September, months after he made tabloid headlines for a rumored, but denied, dalliance with Madonna.

Less than four weeks later, Madonna and filmmaker husband Guy Ritchie announced their own split after nearly eight years of marriage.

Rodriguez, known by fans as "A-Rod," was invited to in-

augurate the sports center by Mexico's richest man, Carlos Slim, whose Telmex Foundation sponsored its construction. The site includes two baseball diamonds and 25 soccer fields.

"It's a pleasure to talk about baseball, to talk about the importance of keeping children off the streets, out of drugs and out of all the bad things that there are in this life," the New York City-born Rodriguez said in Spanish.

It wasn't immediately known if Rodriguez and Madonna met while in Mexico City.

Specter: 'I'll be prepared' for 2010 race

WASHINGTON (AP)—Sen. Arlen Specter, R-Pa., says he's ready for a tough re-election race in 2010, whether it's against MSNBC pundit Chris Matthews or someone else.

Specter, 78, declined to speculate on whether he would face Matthews, who reportedly met with Pennsylvania Democratic Party leaders last week

about a run. But the GOP moderate said he expected challenges from the left and right as he seeks a sixth term.

"I never look over my shoulder, never look behind. Somebody may be gaining on me. I run with blinders. I'll be prepared, whoever my opponents are," Specter said on CNN's "Late Edition."

Sen. Robert Menendez, D-N.J., the head of his party's campaign arm, said he has neither spoken with Matthews, a native Philadelphian, nor any intermediaries for him about a possible challenge to Specter.

"We'll see who decides to run. I haven't seen any firm announcement by anyone," Menendez said on the same program.

Gaming the system is not acceptable in any country

By **ABIGAIL VAN BUREN**
FROM UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

DEAR ABBY: I am a foreign exchange student studying in the U.S. Other exchange students and I have been debating two questions.

The first: Is it OK to buy a movie ticket and watch two or three movies? Some say "yes" because theaters tolerate it in the hope that customers will buy snacks and drinks in the process. Others say it goes against the honor system.

The second is: Is it wrong to return merchandise you never intended to buy in the first place? Example: to buy a novel and return it after reading it. My friends say bookstores expect a certain number of returns and build it into the cost of the books. As long as the book is kept in good condition, it's OK. Other friends stress, however, that this, again, is taking advantage of the honor system.

What is your opinion?

CURIOUS STUDENT IN HOUSTON

DEAR CURIOUS: Both of the examples you have given are forms of cheating and theft. I cannot think of a single country where this kind of behavior is sanctioned. If enough customers behaved that way, it could put the business owner out of business.

And one more thing — you and your fellow exchange students represent your countries, and what you do while you're here reflects not only on yourselves personally, but also the country that sent you.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I have two grandchildren. My first is a girl named "Skylar," and my second is a boy, "Dante." I raised two sons as a single mother and always had a house full of boys.

Since Skylar was born, she has become my world. I take her everywhere with me, but my nerves just can't handle Dante. I am being criticized for treating my grandchildren differently and accused of being prejudiced. It may be true. But Skylar is very sweet, while Dante—whom I do love—is "all boy" and hard to handle.

Are my feelings due to the fact that Skylar is my first grandchild, or because she's the first girl in my life? Or am I just burned out on boys? I turn down dates to spend time with her. I'd rather spend the rest of my life with my granddaughter than any man on Earth.

Do other grandparents feel this way, or am I obsessed?

SKYLAR'S NANA IN FLORIDA

DEAR NANA: They may feel similarly, but if they are intelligent, mature and caring, they conceal it better than you do.

Whether you choose to spend time with your grandchildren or an eligible man is your choice. But to make it obvious that you favor one child over the other is cruel, and the less-loved little one will recognize it, be hurt and resent it.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I have developed a weird habit. I'll remember something that happened in the past, think of what I should have said and then burst out loud with a remark. Other times I'll chuckle or say something like, "Oh, no!"

Sometimes my husband hears me and asks if something is wrong. How can I explain this without seeming like I'm totally losing it? Or am I? I'm only 50, and I'm afraid I'm turning into a dotty old lady.

CRAZY? LADY IN CALIFORNIA

DEAR LADY: What you're doing isn't that unusual, so try to be less hard on yourself. You're not crazy, and you're no dottier than the rest of us. Explain to your husband that when you do this, it is an attempt to "repair" the past.

P.S. If you train yourself to stay in the moment rather than dwelling on things in the past, you will find yourself talking to yourself less often.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

For an excellent guide to becoming a better conversationalist and a more attractive person, order "How to Be Popular." Send a business-size, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for \$6 (U.S. funds only) to: Dear Abby Popularity Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

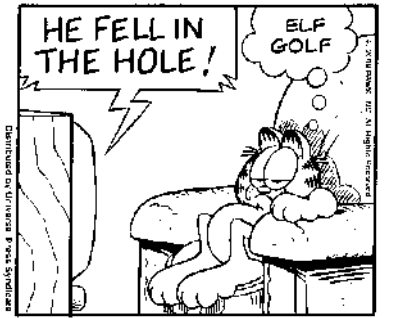
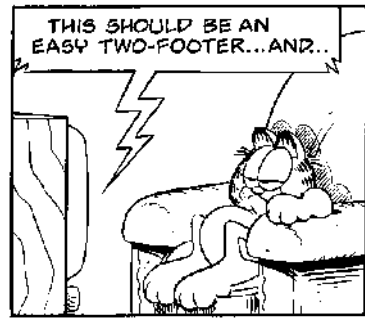


By Bill Waterson



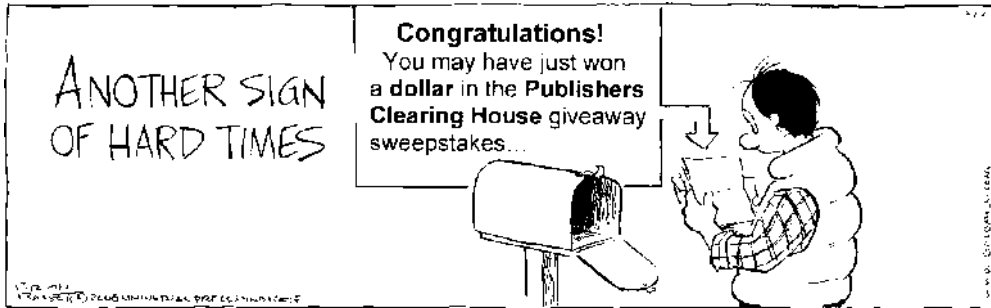
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The Duplex

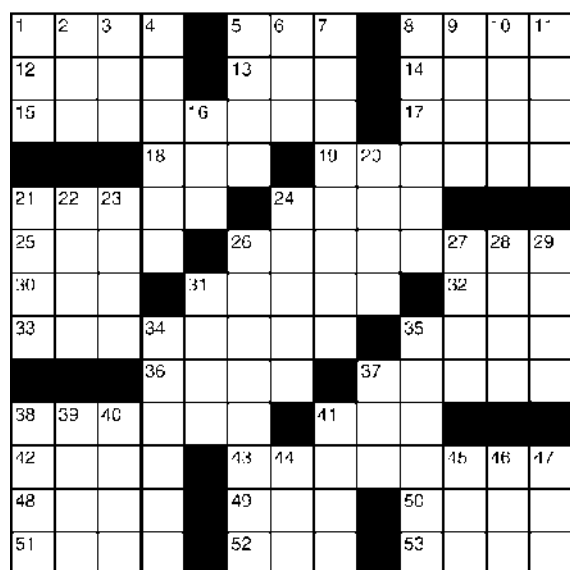
By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

- ACROSS**
- 1 Eastern potentate (Var.)
 - 5 Snoop Dogg's genre
 - 8 Lend a hand
 - 12 Prouberance
 - 13 Chicken-king link
 - 14 October birthstone
 - 15 Sucker of an honest man
 - 17 Spanish artist Joan
 - 18 Ovum
 - 19 Mucilaginous
 - 21 California city
 - 24 MGM mascot
 - 25 Suggestion
 - 26 God of wine
 - 30 Toward the stern
 - 31 Foolish one
 - 32 Unclose, in verse
 - 33 Bishops' jurisdictions
 - 35 — gin fizz
- DOWN**
- 1 Moreover
 - 2 Miss Piggy's pronoun
 - 3 Altar
 - 4 Sovereign's sub
 - 5 Pealed
 - 6 Pub order
 - 7 Soap that debuted in 1999
 - 8 Grits
 - 9 Grand story
 - 10 Caprice
 - 11 Strata-gem
 - 16 Id court-terpart
 - 20 Broad-way award
 - 21 Actor Everett
 - 22 Stereo setup
 - 23 Grooving on
 - 24 Eye cosmetic
 - 26 Mess
 - 27 Unaccompanied
 - 28 "Once — a time"
 - 29 Progeny
 - 31 "Finding —"
 - 34 Bulls, oxen, etc.
 - 35 Santa's transport
 - 37 Carton
 - 38 Robin Williams
 - 39 Black, to poets
 - 40 Cleopatra's river
 - 41 Lady of Spain
 - 44 Charged bit
 - 45 Rotation duration
 - 46 Kreskin's claim
 - 47 That girl
- Solution time: 21 mins.**
- Yesterday's answer 12-2**



STUMPED?

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! \$99 per minute, touch-tone/relay phones. (18+ or y.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Nelly Furtado, 30; Monica Seles, 35; Lucy Liu, 40; Stone Phillips, 54

Happy Birthday: Let your emotions play a role in what you do this year. Be true to yourself, even if it means disrupting the world around you. Not everyone will like your plans but, if you can see your way through the maze, you will come out unscathed and feeling good about who you are and what you've accomplished. Your numbers are 10, 14, 23, 29, 30, 36, 44

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Don't let love bring you down or cost you emotionally when you should be experiencing what life has to offer. You are in a high learning cycle and it's important to try new things. ***

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Pick up something unique for someone you love. Emotions may be hard to hide but, in the end, others will see how sensitive and compassionate you can be. Don't make an impulsive purchase. **

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): You can present and promote a great idea and will easily drum up interest from someone who can contribute to your cause. Serious help from someone with experience will be a bonus. *****

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Get organized at home. Do a little decorating or preparation for the festive season. A change in plans will help you out financially. Talk to someone you've been responsible for in the past and see what he or she has to offer. ***



LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Don't let your generosity limit your financial situation. This may be a good time to pick up the perfect gift for someone you love but be prudent and stick to a budget. You can show your care in a creative way that isn't costly. ***



VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Your ability to think outside the box will make you a contender for advancement. Take work home where you will have the privacy and the peace and quiet to come up with some really good ideas. Love is in the stars. ***



LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Qualify your position regarding what you expect to see happen with some of the plans you have been discussing with family. It won't be clear sailing but you can work toward a compromise and, ultimately, a solution. *****



SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): This is no time to get involved in talks that can be misinterpreted. Love and romance are apparent but changing partners may or may not be what's required. You need to stabilize your situation, not make it more complicated. **



SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Talk to as many people as you can about your plans and ideas. Change will come about if you are willing to push for what you want. Be aggressive, persuasive and to the point about your needs and wants for the future. ****



CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Don't let someone talk you into volunteering for something you don't believe in. Choose the cause you are going to support and you will

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD
IN ASTROLOGY

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get far more out of it in terms of the people you meet. Finalize legal documents. ***

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): This is not the time to exaggerate or to give your own spin to the way you see things. Stick to basics and you will accomplish more. Firm up a decision you've been asked to make and move forward. ***

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): A surprise is in order and will put you in the spotlight when revealed. Plan a trip that will bring you closer to someone you care for. Getting serious about your future intentions will help to stabilize your life and give you greater vision. ***

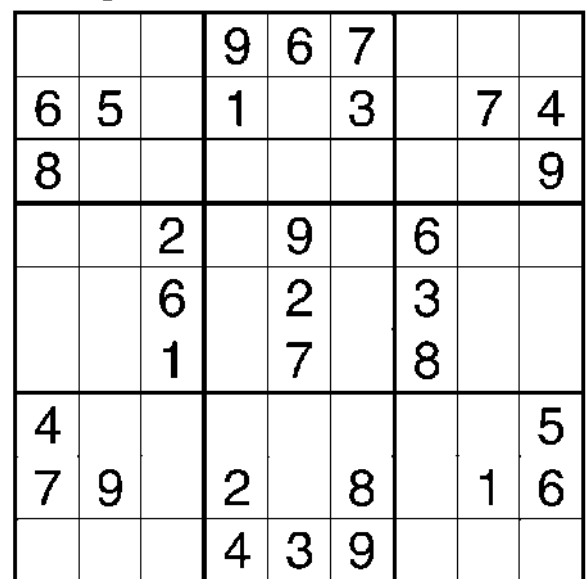
Birthday Baby: You are gifted with originality and innovation. You are an activist and a competitor who strives to be at the top and to lead the pack.

Eugenia's Web sites: astroadvice.com for fun, eugenialast.com for confidential consultations

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

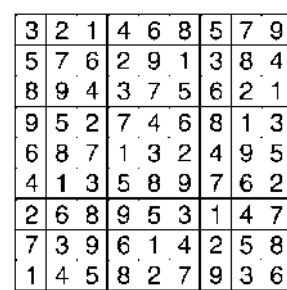
By Dave Green



Difficulty Level ★★

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer



Difficulty Level ★

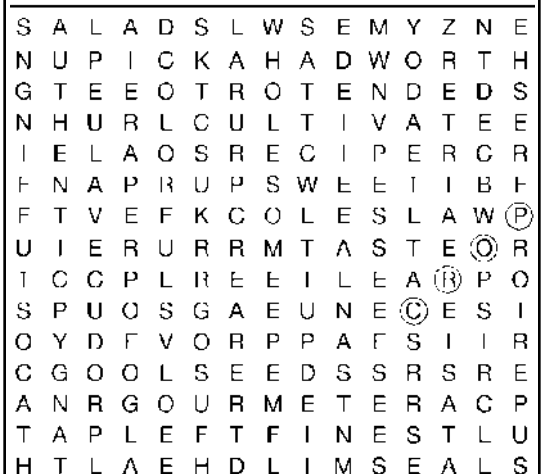
WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle. Find them and CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD. The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

ORGANIC CABBAGE

Solution: 7 letters



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Yesterday's Answer: Icewine

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235-NEWS

Tough D, long pass lead Vikes past Bears



MINNEAPOLIS (AP)—Seconds after the Bears were stopped four times at the 1, Bernard Berrian pulled in a 99-yard touchdown pass from Gus Frerotte that sent the Minnesota Vikings to a 34-14 victory and sole possession of the division lead Sunday night.

Berrian burned former teammate Charles Tillman and sped down the sideline untouched to give Minnesota a 10-7 lead on the 11th 99-yard pass play in NFL history.

"That's the first time I've ever seen a 99-yard play, and I've been playing football since I was 8 years old," Vikings defensive end Jared Allen said. "That right there, that's just a dagger in your chest. Defensively, if that happened to us, I'd be like, 'Holy smokes.'"

The Vikings' previous longest offensive play came in the franchise's second season, an 89-yard pass from Fran Tarkenton to Charley Ferguson on Nov. 11, 1962.



Minnesota Vikings wide receiver Bernard Berrian, left, runs for a 99-yard touchdown on a pass from Gus Frerotte, as Chicago Bears cornerback Charles Tillman gives chase during the second quarter of an NFL football game Sunday, Nov. 30, 2008, in Minneapolis.

AFC East with Miami.

Steelers 33, Patriots 10

At Foxborough, Massachusetts, Pittsburgh held the Patriots to 267 yards, got two touchdown passes from Ben Roethlisberger and four field goals from Jeff Reed and beat the Patriots 33-10 on a cold, rainy day.

Matt Cassel lost two fumbles and two interceptions in the second half and was sacked five times after throwing for at least 400 yards in his past two contests. He was 19-for-39 for 169 yards and no touchdowns against Pittsburgh.

In the second half, the Steelers outscored the Patriots 23-0 and gave up just 81 yards.

Pittsburgh (9-3) stayed a game ahead of second-place Baltimore in the AFC North. New England (7-5) dropped into a second-place tie in the

Broncos 34, Jets 17

At East Rutherford, New Jersey, Jay Cutler and the Broncos stopped the surging Jets, and showed they might be a team to reckon with in the wide-open AFC.

Cutler passed for 357 yards and two touchdowns and rookie Peyton Hillis ran for 129 yards and a score at a wet and windy Meadowlands. The Broncos (7-5) stopping the Jets' five-game winning streak and lead the AFC West by three games with four weeks left.

It was a disappointing loss for New York (8-4), coming off emotional victories at New England and Tennessee and making a claim as the conference's top team.

Cutler finished 27-of-43, and Hillis became the first to rush for 100 or more yards against the Jets' third-ranked run defense.

Brandon Stokley and Eddie Royal each had touchdown catches, and tight ends Tony Scheffler and Daniel Graham combined for 13 catches and 149 yards.

Thomas Jones had 138 yards rushing and two touchdowns for New York, but Brett Favre struggled in the sloppy conditions.

Falcons 22, Chargers 16

At San Diego, Matt Ryan threw two touchdown passes and Michael Turner ran for 120 yards against his former team. The Falcons (8-4) remained a game behind Tampa Bay and Carolina in the NFC South.

San Diego (4-8) lost for the fifth time in six games.

Turner carried 31 times in his sixth 100-yard game of the season. He was allowed to leave San Diego as an unrestricted free agent after last season.

Tomlinson, the two-time

defending NFL rushing champion, was held to 24 yards on 14 carries.

Chiefs 20, Raiders 13

At Oakland, California, Tyler Thigpen put together one effective drive to beat the Raiders in a matchup between two of the NFL's worst teams.

Thigpen engineered a 91-yard drive capped by Larry Johnson's 2-yard tiebreaking run early in the fourth quarter to lead the Chiefs to just their second win in their last 21 games. Kansas City had lost seven in a row.

Colts 10, Browns 6

At Cleveland, defensive end Robert Mathis scooped up Derek Anderson's fumble and rumbled 39 yards for a touchdown in the fourth quarter as the Colts stayed in the thick of the AFC playoff chase by winning their fifth straight.

Still, the Colts (8-4) got a

30-yard field goal from Adam Vinatieri and improved to 5-0 in November, a monthlong run that has allowed them to recover from a 3-4 start.

The Browns (4-8) lost their fourth straight at home and may have lost quarterback Derek Anderson (injured left leg) and tight end Kellen Winslow (injured ankle) for an extended period.

Giants 23, Redskins 7

At Landover, Maryland, Eli Manning had his first 300-yard game of the season, Clinton Portis was held to 22 yards rushing, and the Giants put aside the Plaxico Burress mess with another dominating performance.

The Giants (11-1) have won seven straight and have a three-game lead in the NFC East over the second-place Dallas Cowboys.

The loss not only dropped the Redskins (7-5) out of contention for the division title, but now they also trail Dallas in the wild-card race. Washington has lost three of four—all at home—after a 6-2 start.

Giants president and CEO John Mara found himself answering questions about Burress, who accidentally shot himself in the right thigh at a Manhattan nightclub Friday night and expects to be charged with criminal possession of a weapon. But New York has kept its focus and shown it has more than enough talent to win without him.

Panthers 35, Packers 31

At Green Bay, DeAngelo Williams scored his fourth touchdown of the game with 1:30 left on the clock, giving the Panthers a stunning come-from-behind victory in wintry conditions.

The Packers (5-7) appeared headed for a comeback win of their own after breaking a 28-28 tie on Mason Crosby's 19-yard field goal with 1:57 remaining.

But Green Bay immediately gave up a 45-yard kickoff return to Mark Jones and a 54-yard heave from Jake Delhomme to Steve Smith to set up first-and-goal on the Green Bay 1.

Williams then went up the gut for his career-high fourth score of the game, helping Carolina (9-3) keep pace in the competitive NFC South.

Buccaneers 23, Saints 20

At Tampa, Florida, Jermaine Phillips and Phillip Buchanon intercepted Drew Brees, the NFL's leading passer, in the closing minutes and Matt Bryant kicked a 37-yard field goal with 1:55 remaining.

Brees threw for 296 yards and two touchdowns on a rainy day, but also was picked off three times—once in the end zone—and bothered by the Bucs' pass rush all afternoon.

The victory was the fourth straight for Tampa Bay (9-3).

Brees completed 25 of 47 passes and wiped out a 10-point fourth-quarter deficit by throwing a 20-yard TD pass to Pierre Thomas and taking advantage of a short punt to tie the game on Garrett Hartley's second field goal with 5:34 to go.

49ers 10, Bills 3

At Orchard Park, New York, linebacker Patrick Willis had 14 tackles and a forced fumble in a win that all but ended the Bills' dwindling playoff hopes. The 49ers' win also prevented the Arizona Cardinals from clinching the NFC West and their first playoff berth in 10 years—the longest active playoff drought in the NFL.

Isaac Bruce scored on a 12-yard touchdown pass and Joe Nedney hit a 50-yard field goal as the 49ers never trailed. San Francisco (4-8) won for the second time in three games while the Bills (6-6) lost for the fifth time in six.

Ravens 34, Bengals 3

At Cincinnati, Mark Clayton threw a touchdown pass on a reverse, then made a spectacular one-handed catch for a 70-yard score.

The Ravens (8-4) have won six of their past seven games. Against the Bengals (1-10-1), they added a page for Clayton, a first-round draft pick who emerged as a dual scoring threat on a cold, rainy afternoon.

On Baltimore's second possession of the third quarter, Clayton lined up to the left, took a handoff and headed for the right sideline, selling the play as a reverse. Cornerback Leon Hall fell for it, letting Derrick Mason run free down the right sideline. Clayton's 32-yard touchdown pass—the first of his career—was as easy as they come.

Dolphins 16, Rams 12

At St. Louis, the Dolphins (7-5) made it into the end zone only once, but still secured their fifth victory in six games. The Rams (2-10) lost their sixth in a row.

Lawyer: Burress to turn himself in Monday

LANDOVER, Md. (AP)—Plaxico Burress plans to turn himself in to police Monday morning in New York City and plead not guilty to criminal possession of a weapon, his lawyer said.

Benjamin Brafman wrote in an e-mail to The Associated Press on Sunday that he was advised the New York Giants' star receiver will be charged after accidentally shooting himself in the right thigh.

"I do not expect that Mr. Burress will make a statement," Brafman wrote.

He met with Burress for about an hour Sunday at the player's home in New Jersey.

"I would ask that his fans, the Giants and the media withhold judgment in this matter until all of the facts have been disclosed," Brafman wrote to the AP.

Brafman is a well-known criminal lawyer who has de-

fended mobsters and other high-profile figures, including hip-hop impresario Sean "Diddy" Combs on a bribery and gun possession charge in 2001.

Burress shot himself at a Manhattan nightclub Friday night and was released from a hospital early Saturday, the Giants said.

"As far as we know, he's going to be OK," general manager Jerry Reese said Sunday before the Super Bowl champions' 23-7 victory at the Washington Redskins.

Before the shooting, Burress already had been ruled out of the game because of a leg injury.

New York police and NFL security are investigating what happened Friday. Giants linebacker Antonio Pierce was interviewed by NFL security at the team's hotel Saturday, Reese said.

The NFL wouldn't comment on the expected charge, Burress'

plan to plead not guilty or the league's investigation.

"We are cooperating with the police and continuing to monitor the situation," NFL spokesman Greg Aiello said.

Pierce—who started against Washington—reportedly was present for the latest dramatic turn in a tumultuous season of fines and suspension for Burress.

"Antonio is working on trying to beat the Redskins right now," Reese said before kickoff. "That's where his focus is and where it should be right now."

Pierce deflected several questions after the game. He wouldn't say whether he has a lawyer and when asked if he is concerned about his own situation, Pierce replied only: "No. I'm fine where I'm at."

"I am not answering any questions about the incident that happened Friday night," the

linebacker said. "If you have anything to say about the Washington Redskins, this game and moving forward, I'll answer it. Anything else, I'm not answering."

Giants coach Tom Coughlin said he spoke to his players about Burress' situation but wouldn't get into specifics.

"We all are upset about what happened with Plaxico, and hopefully he's going to be fine and so on and so forth. That's our first concern," Coughlin said. "Once that was taken care of, we knew that he was OK, then the guys got right back to focusing on the reason we were here."

Coughlin wouldn't address Burress' future with the Giants, saying only, "Questions of that nature will be discussed going forward, I'm sure."

Hours earlier, Reese and Giants president and CEO John

Mara also avoided discussing what Burress' status with the team might be.

"I want to wait until we find out all the facts and circumstances before we make any determination," Mara said. "I don't know what happened there, and until we find out exactly what happened, I'm not going to make any comment or make any decision about what his future is."

Reese and Mara said they hadn't spoken to Burress, who hurt his hamstring two weeks ago and was going to miss the game against the Redskins because of that injury.

"I reached out to him," Reese said. "I did not get a return phone call."

Mara repeatedly said the Giants would cooperate with the police and the NFL in their investigations.

Aldridge, Oden lead Blazers past Pistons



A U B U R N HILLS, Mich. (AP)—LaMarcus Aldridge scored 27 points and Greg Oden had a career-high 13 rebounds to help the Portland Trail Blazers beat the Detroit Pistons 96-85 Sunday.

Brandon Roy scored 19 points and Oden finished with 10 for Portland, which has won four straight. The Pistons fell to just 6-6 since Allen Iverson joined the team.

Richard Hamilton had 18 for Detroit, which is 0-4 on Sundays and 10-2 during the rest of the week.

As they have done all season on Sundays, the Pistons got off to a terrible start. Detroit's starters were a combined 1-for-9 in the first quarter, and fell behind by 14 at one point.

Later, Detroit's reserves went on a 10-0 run that helped the Pistons get to 45-42 before Portland scored the final five points of the half. Aldridge had 17 points in the half, 11 more than any Piston.

Portland threatened to pull away throughout the third, but Detroit was able to keep itself in the game. Hamilton's jumper at the quarter buzzer cut the lead to 70-64.

Amir Johnson's put-back tied the game with 9:04 left, and Arron Affalo put them ahead with two free throws on Detroit's next possession.

Steve Blake, though, answered with a 3-pointer, and Roy's three-point play moved Portland up 85-80 with 5:31 left.

Roy and Nicolas Batum hit

jumpers on the next two possessions, giving Portland a nine-point edge, and the Pistons never seriously threatened again.

Lakers 112, Raptors 99

At Los Angeles, Pau Gasol had 24 points and nine rebounds, Kobe Bryant had 23 points and seven assists before sitting out the fourth quarter, and Los Angeles beat Toronto to improve its league-best record to 14-1.

Bryant came 15 points shy of reaching the 22,000-point mark faster than any other player. Had he done it, he would have beaten Wilt Chamberlain to that total by one day, according to the Elias Sports Bureau. Bryant was the fastest to 12,000 and every level up to 20,000. The two-time scoring champion and 10-time All-Star was the second-fastest to 21,000.

Anthony Parker led Toronto with 19 points and five teammates also scored in double figures. Jermaine O'Neal missed his third straight because of a sprained left ankle.

Nuggets 104, Rockets 94

At Denver, Carmelo Anthony's double-figure scoring streak ended after he left with an injury, but Chauncey Billups scored 28 points, including 11 in a 19-7 third-quarter run Denver used to break away from Houston.

The Nuggets lost their leader when Anthony took a seat in the second quarter after aggravating a sore right elbow that's been bothering him for two weeks. Anthony scored just two points, halting his NBA-best streak of consecutive



Portland Trail Blazers forward LaMarcus Aldridge, left, takes a shot against Detroit Pistons forward Rasheed Wallace in the first half of an NBA basketball game Sunday, Nov. 30, 2008, in Auburn Hills, Mich.

games in double figures at 221. He hadn't been held below

10 points since Nov. 28, 2005, when he played just 1 1/2 min-

utes against New Jersey before leaving with a sprained ankle

after scoring two points.

Yao Ming scored 18 points for Houston, which played its third straight game without the injured Tracy McGrady."

Nets 117, Suns 109

Devin Harris scored a career-high 47 points, including 21 in the fourth quarter, and New Jersey rallied to end its 14-game losing streak at Phoenix.

The Nets had not won at US Airways Center since their first visit in 1993, but they used a late run to overcome the Suns.

With Harris becoming the second player in two games to score more than 40 against the Suns—Miami's Dwyane Wade had 43 Friday night—the Nets scored their second road victory in two nights, after beating Utah on Saturday.

Bulls 103, 76ers 92

At Philadelphia, Ben Gordon scored 21 points, Drew Gooden had 20 points and 12 rebounds, and Chicago rallied from an early deficit to beat the hosts.

Derrick Rose, the No. 1 overall pick in the draft, contributed 18 points and 10 assists. Reserve Larry Hughes had 16 points for the Bulls (8-9) in the final stop on a seven-game, 12-day road trip which began Nov. 18 in Los Angeles against the Lakers. All three of Chicago's road wins came on the trip.

Elton Brand had 21 points and 12 rebounds, and Thaddeus Young added 17 points for the reeling Sixers, who have lost four straight to fall to 7-10. Andre Miller had 15 points and 10 assists, and Willie Green chipped in with 12 points.

NEW YORK (AP)—A week before the final standings are released and the Bowl Championship Series is already ticking people off.

Oklahoma—not Texas—is headed to the Big 12 championship game with an inside track to the national title game by moving ahead of the Longhorns in the BCS standings Sunday.

Texas' victory against the Sooners in October wasn't enough to give the Longhorns the advantage in a three-way tie between the Red River rivals and Texas Tech atop the Big 12 South. And that's sure to leave many in Austin dismayed—at the least.

"Going into the last couple of weeks, we knew that a good team was going to be left out of the Big 12 championship. Unfortunately, in this situation, it was us," Texas coach Mack Brown said in a statement. "It is what it is. We don't like it, we don't agree with it or think it's fair, but, like anything else, we'll handle it and move forward."

The Big 12 had to use its fifth tiebreaker, best BCS rating, to determine which team will play

Onward Oklahoma: BCS favors OU over Texas



North winner Missouri on Saturday in Kansas City, Mo.

The Sooners (11-1), who lost to Texas 45-35 in October, barely edged the Longhorns. Oklahoma has a .9351 BCS average. Texas' BCS average is .9223.

Oklahoma was a point ahead of Texas in the USA Today coaches' poll and six points behind the Longhorns in the Harris Interactive. The computer ratings preferred the Sooners and that made the difference.

"They don't have agendas, they don't have loyalties, they don't have opinions. They don't have all the bias that everyone else does," Oklahoma coach Bob Stoops said. "And if you say no one else does, then I don't think you're really being truthful."

So the Longhorns will be

watching two teams they beat play for the conference title, rooting for Missouri.

Oklahoma is second in the BCS standings behind unbeaten Alabama. Texas is third and Florida is fourth.

The winner of the Southeastern Conference championship game between the Crimson Tide and Gators is virtually guaranteed a spot in the BCS national title game on Jan. 8 in Miami.

Oklahoma would earn the other spot by beating Missouri. If the Sooners lose, it could open the door for Texas to go to the national title game, despite not playing for its conference championship.

If voters are squeamish about letting a team that didn't win its conference play for a national championship, maybe Southern California could get a shot at the SEC champ in South Florida.

The Trojans are fifth in the BCS standings with a game to go at rival UCLA.

The Sooners were behind Texas last week in the BCS

standings by a tiny margin. The Sooners actually led the Longhorns in the polls, but a week ago the computers had Texas ahead of Oklahoma.

After the Sooners' 61-41 victory Saturday night against Oklahoma State—14th in the latest standings—and the Longhorns' 49-9 win over lowly Texas A&M on Thanksgiving night, the polls tightened but the computers flipped.

The strength of the Big 12 South led to this new BCS controversy, with the top three teams in the conference each finishing 11-1.

After beating Oklahoma and jumping to No. 1 in the polls, Texas (11-1) lost at Texas Tech 39-33 on Nov. 1. The Red Raiders (11-1), No. 2 at the time, then lost at Oklahoma 65-21 on Nov. 22.

The lopsided loss dropped Texas Tech way back. The Red Raiders were seventh in Sunday's standings.

After beating Texas Tech, Stoops touted his team publicly. But later in the week, Stoops

passed on a chance make another pitch to poll voters and said the politicking that's become a part of the BCS was making more coaches favor a major college playoff.

"I don't think anyone's been comfortable with this," said Stoops, who declined an opportunity to be interviewed on ESPN during the Texas-Texas A&M game. "All parts for the last couple or three weeks, it's been aggravating more than anything."

Brown, maybe sensing that his team was in danger of losing its spot, did his best to campaign for the 'Horns without slighting the Sooners in several national television and radio interviews last week. Brown did a telephone interview with ABC's announcers during the Oklahoma-Oklahoma State broadcast.

Brown has stopped short of supporting a playoff, saying only that the BCS is flawed.

Brown also lamented the Big 12's tiebreaker system, which removed the head-to-head ele-

ment. In other leagues, such as the SEC, a similar three-way division tie would be settled by eliminating the lowest rated team in the BCS standings, then reverting back to head-to-head results between the remaining teams.

"I think their systems are fairer and give more credit to how the two highest ranked teams performed against each other on the field," he said.

But ultimately, the Longhorns' victory against Oklahoma couldn't trump the Sooners' surge over the past two months.

Oklahoma has scored at least 60 points in its past four games, and has won its past five games by at least 20 points.

Though it's not as if Texas has been struggling down the stretch. The Longhorns' only loss came on Graham Harrell's touchdown pass to Michael Crabtree with 1 second left in the game. That was also the fourth of four consecutive games for the Longhorns against teams ranked in the top 11 of the AP poll.

Since losing to the Red Raiders, Texas has won three games by a combined score of 129-37.

Pacman ponders ‘fight to remember’

LOS ANGELES—Manny Pacquiao didn’t take too long to recognize the magnitude of his latest bout or where it stands in the history of the sport.

“This is the fight that people won’t forget even in the next 50 years,” the Filipino ring icon said Wednesday after yet another vigorous workout where he stretched himself beyond the limits imposed by his trainers. “That’s why I consider it an honor to fight [Oscar] De La Hoya.”

Pacquiao has fought several Hall of Fame-bound fighters such as Mexican warriors Erik Morales, Marco Antonio Barrera, and even the indefatigable Juan Manuel Marquez. But for sheer box-office draw and marquee power, none of them comes close to De La Hoya, who, despite having rounded the corner of his career’s peak, is still the sport’s biggest draw.

And with the way Pacquiao speaks, you know he recognizes the difference as easily as he can tell a left hook from a right jab.

“This fight will make me known not only in the Philippines, but also all over the world,” he had previously said.

That’s why the 5-foot-6 bundle of relentless energy, who has fought some of boxing’s most exciting fights fueled by a desire to make his country proud, is now making his mission a little bit more personal this time around.

He still drops the “for the country” phrase every now and then, but not as often as he did in the past. This is his



Manny Pacquiao, spars during a media workout in Los Angeles Monday, Nov. 17, 2008.

biggest fight, he keeps saying nowadays. This is his personal Everest. That’s why apart from his trademark training, he is adding another weapon—one that, well, moves mountains.

“I believe the Holy Spirit and God are behind me,” Pacquiao said of the December 6 “Dream Match” against De La Hoya at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas.

Not only will the fight be his biggest in terms of purse—he is expected to earn something within the zip code of

P15 million—he will also face his biggest opponent, literally, in the Golden Boy, who has a four-inch edge in height and a five-inch advantage in reach.

None of that, however, fazes Pacquiao. All he asks himself when doubts start to creep into his mind is: “Where does your faith lie?”

“I’m always praying to God to help me win the fight,” said the Gen. Santos native. “I have faith in God. Whatever happens in the ring, I know it’s His will.” (PDI)

KEGLERS

From Page 28

Competition in the 22nd Asian Inter City Tenpin Bowling Championships is being held at the Macau Bowling Center.

Aside from Saipan and Korea cities Daegu, Pohang, and Uiwang, other participating cities are Taipei, Tamuning, Hong Kong, Happy Valley, Kowloon,

Victoria, Bangalore, Chennai, Delhi, Kuantan, Shah Alam, Macau, Macau Coloane, Macau Taipa, Paranaque City, Pasay City, and Singapore.

Prior to their singles competition, Dimaano emailed the *Saipan Tribune* about the team’s condition going into the 22nd Asian Inter City Tenpin Bowling Championships.

“Team spirit is very high and we did good in our team practice yester-

day and hopefully the lane condition will be the same today which start the singles event. Ross and Jorge are playing in the morning block and Percy and myself will be in the afternoon block,” he said.

The singles competition will be followed by the Doubles today, Dec. 2. The Team of Four will be held on Dec. 3 and the Masters finals over two days on Dec. 4 and 5.

GHASIAS

From Page 28

points in the fourth set to grab the win.

But Fanians tallied only half of the required points helping Ghasias Brothers to nail a 17-8 triumph and preserve the victory.

It was Fanians’ first loss in the league after winning three matches in the first round and their debut in the second round.

For the third time, Freddie Pelisamen was Ghasias Brothers’ heavy hitter with 17 points scoring five aces, two kees, and a goal.

Ghasias Brothers extended their winning run to four, joining the Ok-

ies (1-0) and the Islanders (1-0) in second place in the team standings in the second round. Defending champion Evenflow is leading the league with a 2-0 record.

Eight teams are playing in the second round, but only the Top 4 will advance to the playoffs.

Okies won their first game in the second round after juicing out FSM Rebels, 54-31.

The first set of Okies-FSM Rebels tiff was a neck-and-neck battle with the former escaping with a 16-14 win. The second set was an easy ride for Okies, 15-1, while FSM Rebels recovered in the third, 16-8. But FSM Rebels ran out of gas in the crucial fourth set allowing the Okies to notch

an impressive 15-0 win.

Christopher Yug of Okies was the game’s heavy hitter firing 18 points on four aces, four kees, and a xunk.

In the second game, Islanders also juiced out Soul Rebels, 56-45.

Islanders swept the first two sets, 16-5 and 16-13, before Soul Rebels found their marks and recorded a 16-8 victory.

In the fourth set, Soul Rebels seemed headed for another win and an upset when they took a 10-5 lead.

But the Islanders regrouped and eked out a 16-11 triumph to foil Soul Rebels’ bid.

Jeff Saures scored 13 points for Islanders on three aces, one xunk, one kee, and one goal.

BLUE POWERS

From Page 28

Alfred Acosta and Riza Cano also nailed a straight set win over Macario and Merlie Tolentino, 21-18, 24-22, in the mixed doubles CC. Ingrid Sanchez and Elma Labuson gave Blue Powers their fourth win after the duo downed Marilyn Montano and Emily Vargas, 21-8, 21-13.

Recording wins for D’Bombers

were the tandems of Pena and Vargas and Montano and Tolentino.

In other results, Smash Killers and Green All-Stars posted similar wins to remain on top of the field.

Smash Killers defeated the Bad Masters, 4-2, to improve to a 15-9 record.

Smash Killers prevailed in the men’s doubles BB, mixed doubles AB and CC, and women’s doubles BB.

Sharing the No. 1 spot with Smash Killers are Green All-Stars, which beat the Gray Hawks, 4-2.

The All-Stars won in the men’s singles B, men’s doubles BB, mixed doubles BC, and women’s doubles BB.

Gray Hawks, which joined Smash Killers and Green All-Stars in the No. 1 spot on Day 3, dropped to second place tying Red Dragons Shuttlers.

Shuttlers improved to a 13-11 slate after outclassing Net Fighters, 4-2.

Shuttlers prevailed in the men’s singles B, men’s doubles BB, and mixed doubles BC and AB.



TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	16	2	.889	—
New Jersey	9	7	.563	6
New York	8	8	.500	7
Toronto	8	8	.500	7
Philadelphia	7	10	.412	8½

Southeast Division

Orlando	13	4	.765	—
Atlanta	10	6	.625	2½
Miami	8	9	.471	5
Charlotte	5	11	.313	7½
Washington	2	12	.143	9½

Central Division

Cleveland	14	3	.824	—
Detroit	10	6	.625	3½
Chicago	8	9	.471	6
Indiana	6	10	.375	7½
Milwaukee	7	12	.368	8

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

Houston	11	7	.611	—
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New Orleans	9	6	.600	½
San Antonio	9	7	.563	1
Dallas	8	8	.500	2
Memphis	4	13	.235	6½

Northwest Division

Denver	12	6	.667	—
Portland	12	6	.667	—
Utah	11	7	.611	1
Minnesota	4	11	.267	6½
Oklahoma City	2	16	.111	10

Pacific Division

L.A. Lakers	14	1	.933	—
Phoenix	11	7	.611	4½
Golden State	5	12	.294	10
Sacramento	5	14	.263	11
L.A. Clippers	3	13	.188	11½

Yesterday's Games

Portland 96, Detroit 85
Chicago 103, Philadelphia 92
Denver 104, Houston 94
New Jersey 117, Phoenix 109
L.A. Lakers 112, Toronto 99

NFL STANDINGS

AMERICAN CONFERENCE

East

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
N.Y. Jets	8	4	0	.667	340	268
New England	7	5	0	.583	277	255
Miami	7	5	0	.583	253	257
Buffalo	6	6	0	.500	276	259

South

Tennessee	11	1	0	.917	304	175
Indianapolis	8	4	0	.667	257	250
Jacksonville	4	7	0	.364	224	240
Houston	4	7	0	.364	252	293

North

Pittsburgh	9	3	0	.750	269	170
Baltimore	8	4	0	.667	292	190
Cleveland	4	8	0	.333	213	247
Cincinnati	1	10	1	.125	151	310

West

Denver	7	5	0	.583	292	319
San Diego	4	8	0	.333	290	274
Oakland	3	9	0	.250	172	265
Kansas City	2	10	0	.167	216	340

Philadelphia	6	5	1	.542	319	249
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South

Tampa Bay	9	3	0	.750	280	200
Carolina	9	3	0	.750	285	231
Atlanta	8	4	0	.667	298	242
New Orleans	6	6	0	.500	337	301

North

Minnesota	7	5	0	.583	287	260
Chicago	6	6	0	.500	281	268
Green Bay	5	7	0	.417	334	295
Detroit	0	12	0	.000	203	393

West

Arizona	7	5	0	.583	338	313
San Francisco	4	8	0	.333	262	313
Seattle	2	10	0	.167	216	311
St. Louis	2	10	0	.167	159	360

Yesterday's Games

Miami 16, St. Louis 12
Carolina 35, Green Bay 31
N.Y. Giants 23, Washington 7
San Francisco 10, Buffalo 3
Baltimore 34, Cincinnati 3
Indianapolis 10, Cleveland 6
Tampa Bay 23, New Orleans 20
Atlanta 22, San Diego 16
Denver 34, N.Y. Jets 17
Kansas City 20, Oakland 13
Pittsburgh 33, New England 10
Minnesota 34, Chicago 14

LOCAL SCORES

GENESIS CUP STANDINGS

Daniel	5	1
Isaiah	5	1
Jeremiah	2	4
Ezekiel	0	6

Islanders	1	0
Ghasias Brothers	1	0
Okies	1	0
Fanians	1	1
Naturals	0	1
FMS Rebels	0	1
Soul Rebels	0	2

NMBF STANDINGS

Smash Killers	15	9
All Stars	15	9
Gray Hawks	13	11
Dragon Shuttlers	13	11
Bad Masters	12	12
Net Fighters	10	14
Blue Powers	9	15
D'Bombers	8	16

BUDWEISER SOFTBALL STANDINGS

Men's Division

DCCA	5	0
CPA	3	0
Freedom Air	4	1
Legislature	4	1
Beach Boys	3	1
Joeten Motors	4	1
DLNR	3	1

ROCBALL STANDINGS

Evenflow	2	0
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Law & Order	2	1
No Zone	2	2
POI	2	2
DEQ/CRM	2	3
Saipan Cell	2	3
P & S	1	3
PSS	1	3
CUC	1	4
CHC	1	3
Customs	0	2
PIC	0	3
Hopwood	0	4
Mayors	0	4

Women's Division

NMC	3	0
DCCA	3	1
Finance	2	2
CHC	1	2
CUC	0	4

SAIPAN

From Page 28

dinner party at 5pm.

The marathon will begin at 4am, while the half marathon and 10-km run will begin at 5:45am. All runners will begin at Micro Beach at American Memorial Park overlooking Managaha Island.

The following are the routes for the three events:

■ The Full Marathon Course: Micro Beach north along Middle Road through the villages of Puerto Rico, Tanapag, and San Roque; turnaround in the peaceful greenery of Marpi right after passing Marianas Resort Hotel; return to connect with the Half Marathon Course;

■ The Half Marathon Course: Micro Beach south along Beach Road along

Saipan’s western lagoon; through the villages of Garapan, San Jose, Susupe, Chalan Kanoa, and San Antonio; turnaround at Pacific Islands Club; return and finish at Micro Beach; and

■ The 10-km Course: Micro Beach south along Beach Road; through the villages of Garapan and San Jose; turnaround in-front of First Hawaiian Bank; return and finish at Micro Beach.

The age divisions for the full marathon are up to 40, 40-49, and 50 years and up. The half and 10km age groups are 14 and under, 15-19, 20-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59 and 60 plus. Prizes will be given out for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place in each category. Raffle drawings for prizes will also be held at the banquet. All runners will receive a finisher’s T-shirt after the event.

To register or for more information, contact Ed Diaz at 664-3210 or email at ediaz@mymarianas.com. (PR)

Jets zoom past SaipanCell in extra inning

The Jets' Myron Sablan at-bat for a single at the top of the seventh inning of their game against SaipanCell in the SaipanCell in the Budweiser 2008 Inter Government/Business Softball League Wednesday night at the Miguel "Tan Ge" Basa Pangelinan Ballfield.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

By **ROSELYN B. MONROYO**
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER



The Joeten Motor Jets regained their bearings after being grounded by the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs last time out by pulling off a 15-12 win in extra innings over SaipanCell in the Budweiser 2008 Inter Government/Business Softball League Wednesday night at the Miguel "Tan Ge" Basa Pangelinan Ballfield.

Pitcher J.J. Laniyo and leftfielder Ben Taisacan connected on one homer apiece in the eighth inning to help the Jets recover from a 7-17 loss to DCCA and improve to a 4-1 record.

Second batter Laniyo blasted a two-run homer at the top of the eighth inning, while third batter Ben Taisacan made it back-to-back round-trippers for the Jets hitting a solo homer.

Second baseman Hector Efraim nailed a one-run single, while extra hitter Jess Taitano had a two-run double, as the Jets outscored SaipanCell in the extra inning, 6-3.

Regulation ended at 9-all with the Jets forcing an extra inning after Ernie Tenorio's single drove Myron Sablan home.

SaipanCell had a chance to take the win in regulation, but had its

first three batters at the bottom of the seventh thrown out. Centerfielder John Acosta and first baseman Marino Hiroichi were beaten to first. Laniyo walked third batter and second baseman Ben Aguon, who was later tagged out at third base.

After the Jets scored three runs at the top of the extra inning taking a 15-9 lead, SaipanCell must score at least six runs to extend the game.

Extra hitter and leadoff batter Ferdy Ngirmekur gave SaipanCell its first run at the bottom of the eighth on a Payton Sakuma single.

Second batter James Villacrusis singled, while the next two batters flied out. The next two batters singled, while rightfielder Theo Minor had a two-run single bringing Villacrusis and Sakuma home to move SaipanCell within three, 12-15. But that was the last time SaipanCell scored, as Acosta was beaten to first.

SaipanCell absorbed its third loss in five games.

P&S 4, CPA 1 (rained out)

In the second game, Procurement & Supply was leading Commonwealth Ports Authority, 4-1, at the bottom of the second inning when the game was suspended due to rain.

P&S and CPA scored one run apiece in the first before the former made a three-run top of the second to take control of the game.

Pitcher Ed Mendiola led off for CPA at the bottom of the second and was beaten to first, while rightfielder Adian Mendiola singled.

Catcher Lee Monkeya was heading at the plate when rain poured and halted the play.

Players and game officials waited for the rain to stop for a few minutes, but were frustrated and decided to call off the match.

CPA was hoping to get its fourth win in as many games and join DCCA on the club of unbeaten teams.

P&S was aiming to improve its 1-3 record.

POI 10, Customs 9 (rained out)

The third game of the night—POI vs. Customs—was also rained out with the former ahead, 10-9, at the top of the fourth inning.

Customs took an early 4-0 lead after one inning capitalizing on POI's errors.

But POI grabbed the driver's seat when it shut out Customs in the second and had a seven-run bottom of the third. Customs made only five runs at the top of the third, allowing POI to take the upper hand after three complete innings, 10-8.

Jack Cepeda led off for Customs and scored on a J.P. Sablan single. Sablan was later tagged out to second base. POI pitcher Maurice Omengkar walked third baseman Ton Iguel before rain started to pour again, forcing organizers to call it a night.

PTI donates to Tsunami Saipan



Tsunami Swimming Center Saipan's upcoming off-island campaigns got a big boost after the club received a donation from PTI last month.

Tsunami Saipan coach Hiro Kimura and club president Stan Good received the \$2,250 check donation from PTI general manager Larry Knecht and PTI regional comptroller Rose Soledad.

The donation will be used to purchase new warm-up jackets and equipment, which will help prepare Tsunami Saipan swimmers for off-island tournaments.

"This donation is a big help in making the swimmers become more competitive for off-island meets and it will encourage more youth to join swimming," Kimura said.

Good said the donation from PTI is greatly appreciated by the swimmers and the officials and members of the club.

"This generous donation demonstrates PTI's commitment to the community and its support of sports for the youth on the island. Thank you, PTI," Good said.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Tsunami Saipan coach Hiro Kimura, second left receives the check donation from PTI regional comptroller Rose Soledad, second right at the PTI Office in Chalan LauLau. Joining them are PTI general manager Larry Knecht, left, and Tsunami Saipan president Stan Good, right.

Tsunami Saipan swimmers are set to compete in the Guam International Swim in Hagatna on Dec. 27 and 28. The international event is for swimmers who have at least one A time, which represents a level equal to 84 percent of the National Reportable Time.

NRT or T16 represents a level that a swimmer must surpass to submit his name for consideration in the annual Top 16 list. The annual rankings are published in

the *Swimming World* magazine and each qualifier receives certification from USA Swimming. Swimmers earning a NRT are in the top 1 percent of the American Age Group swimmers.

After the tournament in Guam this month, Tsunami Saipan swimmers will be busy preparing for eight off-island tournaments next year.

The list include Junior Pan Pacific Championships, which

Guam will be hosting from Jan. 8 to 11.

Next up the Tsunami Saipan swimmers is the Short Course Championships, also in Guam on Feb. 21.

In March, Tsunami Saipan is scheduled to participate in two tournaments in Tokyo, Japan. Tsunami Saipan swimmers will compete in Tokyo Junior Sprint on March 14 and 15, and in the Junior Olympic event on March 28 and 29.

In May, Tsunami Saipan swimmers will travel to Darwin, Australia for the Arafura Games, which will run from May 17 to 19. Later that month, Tsunami Saipan will compete in the Guam Championships.

In July, Tsunami Saipan along with other selected CNMI swimmers will represent the Commonwealth in the FINA World Championships. Rome will host the world meet from July 19 to 31.

Tsunami Saipan will end the 2008-2009 season with its participation in the Junior Olympic Time Trial in Tokyo on July 26 and 27. **(Roselyn B. Monroyo)**

Isaiah lords it over Jeremiah

By **ROSELYN B. MONROYO**
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REPORTER

Isaiah ended the second round of the 2008 CIM-FCC Inter-Color Basketball League-3rd Genesis Cup on a winning note thumping Jeremiah, 93-81, Friday night CIM-FCC Basketball Court in Gualo Rai.

Jun Tabora and Jeremy Tamayo combined for 32 of Isaiah's 53 points in the second half to lift their team to its fifth win in six games.

The victory moved Isaiah in a tie for the lead with Daniel. The loss dropped Jeremiah's record to 2-4 putting the defending champion's chances for a return trip to the finals in danger.

Only the top two teams after the three-round robin regular season will advance to the championship match. Jeremiah is in third place and must sweep its last three games to earn at least a playoff for the last finals ticket. Jeremiah should also hope only one team from the top two squads in the second round will win two games in the third round.

Jeremiah was still in contention and even led at halftime, 42-40, with Amor Casabuena, Bernard Montano, and Wowie

Abuel firing 10 points apiece in the first half.

But the trio slowed down in the second half combining for 19 points. The three Jeremiah gunners were outscored by the duo of Tamayo and Tabora in the second half to hand the defending champion its fourth loss.

Tabora finished with 32 points, while Tamayo chipped in 30, making three triples in the second half.

Bart Demapan added 13, while James Wabinga contributed 11 for Isaiah's balance offense.

Manolo Manalo paced Jeremiah with 19 points, while Montano and Abuel tallied 18 and 16 markers, respectively.

The third round of the Genesis Cup will begin this Thursday with Jeremiah and Isaiah squaring off anew. On Friday, Daniel will collide with Ezekiel.

Isaiah 93—Tabora 32, Tamayo 30, Demapan 13, Wabinga 11, Pablo 4, Licop 3.

Jeremiah 81—Manalo 19, Montano 18, Abuel 16, Casabuena 15, Buenabaja 6, Olivos 5, Garcia 2.

Scoring by halves: 40-42, 93-81.

TDHC Dart Tournament starts today

Tinian Dynasty Hotel and Casino's Club TDHC will host its first ever dart tournament starting tonight at the staff housing recreation area.

Dubbed 1st TDHC Dart Tournament, it will run from 5:30pm

to 12am and will have 32 participants.

Newly elected Club TDHC president said the competition, also known as cricket and killers, will serve as the fundraising campaign for the organization. **(PR)**

Islandwide fast-pitch sked out



The 2008 Islandwide Men's Fast-pitch Softball League continues tonight with a double header at the Miguel Basa "Tan Ge" Pangelinan Softball Field.

The CNMI Softball Association

president Manny Tenorio said the 6:30pm first game will have Islanders taking on Bud Boys, while the second game will feature defending champion D9ers looking for win No. 2 against Proa beginning at 8pm.

Action continues on Thursday with Tanapag squaring off

against Top Ten in the 6:30pm opener and Bud Boys taking the field opposite Proa in the 8pm nightcap.

D9ers won the first game of the young season last Nov. 18 when it bludgeoned Tanapag, 12-2, at the Oleai Sports Complex field.

D-9ers won last year's championship after sweeping

Tanapag Falcons in a best-of-three title series.

The D-9ers clobbered the Falcons in Game 1, 13-2, and foiled the latter's bid to extend the series by cruising to a 15-3 triumph in Game 2.

It was the seventh title overall for D-9ers, which went undefeated in the 2007 season. **(PR)**



Tough D, long pass lead Vikes past Bears

Seconds after the Bears were stopped four times at the 1, Bernard Berrian pulled in a 99-yard touchdown pass from Gus Frerotte that sent the Minnesota Vikings to a 34-14 victory and sole possession of the division lead Sunday night. **24**

Saipan Tribune Sports



Jets zoom past Saipan-Cell in extra inning

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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Keglers seeeing action in Macau

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSISTANT EDITOR

The 22nd Asian Inter City Tenpin Bowling Championships got rolling at Macau, China yesterday with four veteran keggers seeing action for the CNMI.

Ross Zapanta toppled the most pins for Team Saipan in the singles competition, as he finished in 30th place in the 80-man field with a six-game series total of 1,174 pinfalls, good for a 195.67.

He started with three straight 200-plus rolls of 202, 204, 204 before struggling with a pedestrian 157 in the fourth game. The Office of Public Auditor employee, however, bounced back with 191 and 216 to finish his outing.

Percy Omechalang came in 65th with a 1,087 total and a 181.17 average built around rolls of 137, 170, 208, 179, 179, and 214.

Ador Dimaano is three spots down



The Saipan team to the 22nd Asian Inter City Tenpin Bowling Championships in Macau, China. From left, Ross Zapanta, Ador Dimaano, Percy Omechalang, and Jorge Soledad.

at No. 68 with 1,080 pinfalls and 190 average (156, 177, 158, 175, 217, and 197), while Jorge Soledad wound up in the 72nd spot with his 170, 159, 138, 172, 235, and 165 good for 1039 pinfalls and 173.17 average.

Kong Byoung Hee of Uiwang won the gold medal in the singles competition with his 1,364 pinfalls and 227.33.

Lee Dong Hee of Pohang City settled for the silver medal with his 1,324 total and 220.67 average, while Lee Tae Ju of Daegu took the bronze after knocking down 1,302 pins, good for a norm of 217.

Results for the women singles were still not available as of press time.

See **KEGLERS** on Page 26

Blue Powers defuse D'Bombers

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

After bowing to their foes in the first three days of the 2nd Traders Insurance Badminton Team Tournament, Blue Powers finally showed their might overpowering D'Bombers, 4-2, Saturday night at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

The win improved Blue Powers' record to 10-4 moving them out of the bottom of team standings. D'Bombers

are now the tournament's cellar dwellers with their 8-16 record.

Blue Powers prevailed in the men's singles B, men's doubles B, mixed doubles CC, and women's doubles BB to end their slump.

Mario Diola topped Arnel Bansagale in the men's singles B, 21-11, 21-11. Diola then joined forces with Roger Vales to thwart Eric Pena and Puy Macario in the men's doubles BB, 21-19, 21-10.

See **BLUE POWERS** on Page 26



Blue Powers' June Padua in action during their mixed doubles AB game against D'Bombers during the 2nd Traders Insurance Badminton Team Tournament Saturday night at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium. Looking on is Padua's teammate and captain Roger Vales.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Ghasias Brothers whip Fanians

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Ghasias Brothers won the battle of unbeaten teams in the 2008-2009 World Organized Rocball Community League walloping the Fanians, 59-34, in the second round of the regular season Saturday at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

Ghasias Brothers, who is composed of veteran Rocball players, gave Fanians their worst beating since joining the league last year.

Fanians players are mostly indoor and beach volleyball enthusiast and started playing Rocball last year. De-



spite being new to Saipan's indigenous sport, Fanians left an impressive mark in their debut last season.

But Fanians' lack of experience was uncovered by Ghasias Brothers, which showed dominance in the first two sets, 15-3, 15-8.

Fanians regained their form in the third set, pulling off a 15-12 win. Ghasias Brothers still led by a big margin, 42-26, and Fanians needed to win by 16

See **GHASIAS** on Page 26

Saipan Marathon all set for January

Northern Marianas Athletics and Marianas Visitors Authority are at the starting blocks for the annual Saipan Marathon set for January 2009.

Local and international competitors are anticipated to join the marathon on Jan. 17, which will consist of a full marathon (42.195 km), a half marathon (21.079 km), and a 10-km fun run along Saipan's scenic roadways.

The fee to register for the full marathon is \$35 and the half and 10km is \$25. A late fee of \$10 will be added for registration after Jan. 9, and all interested participants are encouraged to register early. The last day of registration is Jan. 16. No entries will be accepted on the day of the race.

Orientation for all participants will be held at 4pm on Jan. 16 at the American Memorial Park Amphitheater, followed by a carbo spaghetti

See **SAIPAN** on Page 26

Soul Rebels' Ryan Lisua goes for a kee during their game against Evenflow in Wednesday's game in the Rocball league at the Marianas High School Gymnasium. Soul Rebels took on Islanders Saturday and lost.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO